आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

Rigveda, 1-89-1

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors

K. M MUNSHI

R. R DIWAKAR

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RAMDAS SPEAKS

Volume III

By

SWAMI RAMDAS

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

Organising Committee:



Swami Ramdas

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

RAMDAS SPEAKS

VOLUME III

SWAMI RAMDAS



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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books, 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages. Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes requires ample funds and an all-India organisation The Bhavan is exerting its utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of the Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions which would allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the framework of the Moral Order, we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him

The world, we feel, is too much with us Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspiration which such books can teach

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all Books in other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, as also the movements of the mind in India, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C Rajagopalachari, the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita*, by H V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata* "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it He who knows it not, knows not the heights and depths of the soul, he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic: it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine, it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival, but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas in which the climax is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of Bhavan's activity successful

1, Queen Victoria Road,
New Delhi

K. M MUNSHI

3rd October 1951

FOREWORD

Sri Swami Ramdasji's speeches and talks including answers to questions from 21st August to 14th September, 1954, during his sojourn in Switzerland, Germany and France in the course of his world tour in 1954, were published as RAMDAS SPEAKS Vols I and II This volume which is a sequel to the earlier ones, contains his speeches etc, from 14th September to 19th October, 1954, in France, Belgium Holland, England and America

—ANANDASHRAM

Anandashram P O,
Dist Cannanore,
Kerala, South India

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Let your heart be ever filled with the sweetness of Ramnam.

All joy and peace to you.

Hearty Blessings

Ramdas

23. 4. 57

RAMDAS SPEAKS

Vol. III

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FRANCE

Saint-leu-la-Foret, 14th September, 1954
At the Residence of Mrs Vera Landowska.

TAGORE AND PARAMAHAMSA

Questioner Are there around us people who have reached Moksha or Nirvana and of whom we do not know?

Ramdas There are so many, unknown to the world, who have conquered their lower nature and are living in the highest divine consciousness

Q When Swami Vivekananda asked Maharshi Tagore whether he had seen God, it seems Tagore replied that God had not given him the experience of oneness with Him But yet Tagore was a very great spiritual power at that time

Ramdas One has to pass through several stages before one reaches the ultimate state of oneness with God. Tagore may have reached the last but one rung of the ladder He was feeling the nearness of God and he had attained thereby great spiritual power Ramdas spoke a little while ago about the power of Sattwic quality When you are in pure Sattwa Guna you get glimpses of God Oneness can be realised only when you transcend the relative and reach the absolute In the Sattwic state there is thus a thin transparent screen between yourself and God, and it is due to this screen that you feel the sense of duality still persisting Ramdas has seen with his own eyes that in this Sattwic state some souls have possessed immense spiritual powers by which they have been able to do wonderful work in the world Thousands used to go to see them and derive benefit because they radiated Sattwic light which is God's own light, reflecting as it were through a thin transparent screen So, Tagore must have reached this state and he frankly confessed that he had not realised his oneness with God Whereas when Swami Vivekananda went to see Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to whom he put the same question, he said, 'I have seen

God' That means Sri Ramakrishna had gone beyond the Sattwa Guna and realised his oneness with the Truth, i.e., he knew that he and God were one So, the difference between the two is that the one had reached the last but one step, while the other had reached the summit of spiritual realisation

MONASTIC LIFE IS A BAR TO SPIRITUAL PERFECTION

Q The priest told us the other day that the founders of great monastic Orders had not yet reached the top of spiritual realisation and that often they had to go through two more stages before they could actually reach what St Theresa called the Seventh Castle Would that apply to Tagore also?

Ramdas The followers of religious Orders are always handicapped They do not rise beyond a certain stage in the spiritual advancement because they are bound by the institutions they have started The spiritual Masters had not founded any religious organisations as such, but after their lifetime their followers started them The Masters themselves never founded any religion, creed or cult, but preached to humanity the universal truths Those who have started such organisations are caught up in them and their spiritual progress is obstructed and often cut off They remain in lower planes and find it difficult to rise

SELF-IMPOSED DISCIPLINE ALONE IS FRUITFUL

Q. Some days back I had a talk with a Roman Catholic monk, who is about 70 years old but has no realisation. He is not able to impart anything by his teaching or by his example When we cannot find a real Teacher even in our own monastic Order, what can we do?

Ramdas That may be the reason why some aspirants living in monasteries get out of them and come to the open, to find some spiritual guide. In spiritual matters, Ramdas has found that the best rules are those which are self-imposed and not those made for the aspirant by somebody else. You know how you should progress on the path and what disciplines you have to observe You are

the best judge in the matter. If you go by the rule of the thumb and act according to instructions chalked out for you by somebody else, however great, they do not help you on the spiritual path. On the other hand, your progress is rendered difficult But if you examine yourself and find out your own defects and see how they can be best remedied by laying down for yourself certain rules of conduct and strictly abiding by them, it will be easy for you to go forward That is how Ramdas felt He never joined any organisation for his spiritual growth Guru within him mysteriously guided him and made everything easy for the realisation Then he found that the best rules to be followed were those which this Guru set for him from time to time It is clear now that our guide in such matters must be the Guru within us and not without A tree does not grow in the shade of another tree. If it is planted in the open it grows into a huge tree, whereas under another tree it will have only a stunted growth. So you must have free and open atmosphere, so to say, to develop yourself You may receive inspiration from saints and sages but your inner growth will have to be in conformity with your nature You cannot have spiritual unfoldment by trying to act according to another's instructions You learn from the lives of great saints and sages that they never lived like hot-house plants They never grew in Ashrams or hermitages They got the highest realisation by their own Sadhana independent of any external guidance or interference So, it is better to allow the soul to evolve freely in an atmosphere of freedom unfettered by societies, institutions or organisations On this point Ramdas is very definite This is the truth, and truth sometimes is not palatable

BE LIKE THE TREE THAT GROWS IN THE OPEN AIR

Q Does it not mean that we are somewhere between the devil and the deep sea, because in the Ashrams and established organisations we enjoy certain amount of freedom and we find it very easy to be conscious that we have a divine purpose, whereas in the outside life, even

if we have got the feeling of union with God, that is lost because we are busy with so many problems and have no time for anything? We are continuously mixing up with people who are always thinking of only sex and money. If we take a begging bowl we are sure to find ourselves in the prison. Perhaps that may be the solution.

Ramdas: You are fed in the prison free, without the need for begging. But let us try to understand the question. People have got a rosy idea about life in Ashrams. There are so many who have lived in an Ashram for a very long time and yet they have not made any appreciable progress. So they have left it. If they continue there, they remain where they started from and sometimes they have also fallen. They go to an Ashram with so much aspiration, and after sometime it cools down and they feel they had better be outside the Ashram. Just a while ago Ramdas said that a plant cannot grow under a big tree even if it is of the same species. You must receive the grace of a saint, go out and practise for yourself as a pearl-fish does. The fish takes in a drop of rain water and then goes into the depths of the sea to fashion the drop into a pearl. We must receive grace from saints and purify ourselves so that we can realise God within us. It is a common experience that those disciples who live in the constant company of their Masters slacken their disciplines. They depend on their Masters for guidance and protection.

So they do not rely on God within. The disciples can look within and get guidance only if they stop looking upon somebody outside for guidance. What is needed is that you should turn your mind within, and the best thing for that is to remain where you are and practise the disciplines prompted from within and finally get divine illumination. That is what Ramdas himself did when he was going from place to place soon after his initiation by his Guru. Though he visited many Ashrams, he had no idea of living in any of them permanently. He had Darshan of great saints but found that those who remained in their company did not develop though they had stayed there for fifteen to twenty years. They had practically gained

very little They asked Ramdas also to stay on there But God within told him to have company of the saint for two or three days and then go into solitude. If he had remained in such Ashrams he also would have become one like those who had stayed there for many years and got nothing Though he was moving from place to place he had his mind always in God, enjoying full freedom In that freedom God taught him what he should do and what he should not, in order to purify his mind and make him ready for God-realisation. So, hand yourself over to the Divine and be guided by Him completely Receive the grace of saints but do not think of taking shelter permanently in any Ashram Be like the tree that grows freely in the forest. Live alone. Then God within you will talk to you, help you, guide you from moment to moment This is what the Guru teaches you God within, from whom you receive inspiration, is none other than your Guru, who initiated you from outside in the form of a human being In fact, he is your Antaryami, the Atma within you, who appears before you to show you that he is within you When you know this it is for you to find Him within, depending only upon His help So many have been hanging upon the Guru outside, but after the Guru passes away they feel they are stranded How can the Guru pass away? At the very start they ought to have found the Guru within themselves Guru is the immortal Spirit Never look upon him as a mere person If you have this attitude and experience from the very beginning, you will never think the Guru ever dies, you will never feel his absence as you know he is eternally within you

GURU GUIDES YOU TO HIMSELF WITHIN YOU

Q Does the Guru show only the way but not take the disciple to the destination?

Ramdas Guru shows that he is dwelling in the heart of the disciple. This is the first instruction of the Guru and he also teaches the disciple the ways of approach. If the disciple follows them he will go within himself and realise the Guru who is no other than God Guru's work

is to dispel darkness and bring light. He awakens the disciple to the consciousness of the all-pervading, eternal nature of God. So you find that the Guru not merely shows the way but also takes the disciple to the destination. The destination is God within him.

Q: Therefore the Guru guides us to the destination, but is not the destination.

Ramdas: Destination is God God and Guru, as Ramdas said, are one God within you cannot be seen. He comes to you in human form and shows that God whom you seek is within and that he who is instructing you and God within you are not different He assumes the human form to guide you to go within because you do not get any direction yourself from within as your mind is impure Internal guidance can come to you only when your mind is pure. So the Guru from outside teaches you how to purify your mind so that you may see God within you and also realise that Guru and God are one

OUR MINDS CREATE HELL OR HEAVEN

Q: I believe that if our intention is good we will get guidance from God. Do you agree with it, or do you think that some special technique is essential in Sadhana? It is also said that he who knows the Truth can manage to be happy even in hell

Ramdas: That is what a devotee in India also said "Oh God, I do not care whether you put me in hell or heaven, as I can be happy anywhere in your remembrance If you put me in hell I will throw into it one drop of the bliss I am enjoying through communion with you and convert it into heaven". So hell and heaven are in our own minds If our mind is in tune with God, we are in heaven If not, we are in hell Even if we are taken to heaven we will be unhappy if we forget God, and turn it into a veritable hell We may have very good intentions, but intentions alone will not be enough We must also live up to those intentions We may have pious thoughts but not do pious actions. Unless our good thoughts are translated into action we will be like trees that bear no fruit.

MANTRA PURIFIES WHEN CHANTED WITH LOVE

Q Is there a special technique for repeating Ram Mantra? In the West we have been told that there must be the exact sound and exact pronunciation of the words if we are to get the fullest benefit.

Ramdas What is needed is that we should repeat the Mantra with all love, faith and devotion Even if we repeat it according to certain rhythm and pronunciation suitable for that particular Mantra it may of course produce some harmonious vibrations in us, but surely it will not lead us to higher experience of union with God It may give us some joy because every music gives us joy We can derive real benefit only if we have intense love and devotion The Mantra purifies us thoroughly and attunes our mind with God so much so that we forget the body-idea and realise our oneness with Him It is important that we should not make a mistake in repeating the Mantra Ramdas has noticed that our European friends are unable to pronounce some of the Sanskrit words properly Even in repeating Ramnam they make slight mistakes Such mistakes should be avoided

Q. Can't God understand even if we mispronounce His name?

Ramdas He can, provided you feel you are taking His name Then, even if you utter it wrongly it does not matter. When a child calls its mother it may be doing so in a distorted manner, but all the same the mother responds and loves the child However, the mother teaches the child to pronounce the name correctly So God will teach you, coming in the form of a Guru, to pronounce His name correctly.

Q When one is in union with God, does that mean one is God — one's own God?

Ramdas. He is God, and for him everything is God.

SATAN IS EGO

Q In your conscience, is there such a thing as the idea of sin as taught by Christian religion?

Ramdas. Sin has come from Satan, is it not?

Ramdas compares the ego within us to Satan The ego makes us do evil things. Evil things are done with a sense of separation from our fellow-beings The sense of separation itself is sin To know that you are one with others is virtue So, who is making us think that we are separate from others? The ego. We must free ourselves from the clutches of the ego and then we will be free from the sin of separation and attain a state of unity which is immortality, peace and bliss. If you want to conquer the Satan within you, you have to follow the teachings of Jesus who came to tell us how to conquer Satan. He said "Love thy neighbour as thyself" That is the way by which you can conquer the ego-sense, rise above the sense of duality and reach supreme unity

Q: As long as we try to overcome it, it means we have not overcome it

Ramdas True By struggling single-handed we sometimes meet with defeat. If we take God's help we will succeed.

Q. Should this victory be a continuous process?

Ramdas. When you have triumphed over evil completely, you will ever be in the divine consciousness and you will feel ever one with God Then there is no fall from that state, because God's grace has entirely transformed you and rooted out the sense of separation from Him

DEVOTEE IGNORES THE PROBLEM OF REINCARNATION

Q: Is the problem of reincarnation controversial in India, as it is in the West? Some philosophers say it is true and others say it is not

Ramdas From the point of view of a devotee who strives to surrender himself to God and get His full grace, it does not matter to him whether he believes in reincarnation or not So the question may be overlooked by a seeker after Truth His one aim and ambition is to make himself fit for God-realisation He should invoke the grace of God to help him in his struggle, and go forward. Let us take it that we are starting our life here

and now. We know our own weaknesses and it is clear that we are unfit to realise the all-powerful, immortal God So we go about asking those who are advanced in the path for instructions in order to purify ourselves, which is a necessary condition for realisation We must know how to walk on this path and how to reach Him by overcoming obstacles After receiving their instructions we have to follow the path strictly

By battling against the obstacles that come in our way, we develop inner strength so very necessary for our progress We also know that God Himself has put these obstacles in our path for our own good The question of past life and future life does not in any way trouble us That is how Ramdas himself felt when he was marching on the path He never bothered about the past or the future His concern was with the immediate present Let us try to be in tune with God in the present and attain that spiritual destiny for which alone God has given us this human body.

In Christianity and Islam we find that no mention is made of past lives, and Christian mystics ignore the question of past lives It is not essential that one should believe in past lives. In India devotees or mystics feel that God does everything for the best They have the conviction that everything happens by the will of God who is all love and mercy Even the worldly losses that come to them, they consider as God-ordained and they submit They are fully confident that by passing through sufferings patiently, they will ultimately get transformed into the Divine

'UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN'

Just as manure is necessary for the growth of the plant, they consider that trials and tribulations are necessary for the growth of the soul In this way they conquer all suffering. Joy and sorrow are all mental states When you are in a particular state of mind you take certain happenings as for your good and you are happy. When you are in another state of mind you take the same events

as harmful to you and so you are unhappy Evil and good are only mental states and nothing outside you exists as good and bad It has been rightly said "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" There is no standard of good and evil universally applicable. All our standards are mind-made If you take everything that happens as coming from God, you will remain serene and calm Mahatma Gandhi was put in jail. There were also many thieves in the jail But the difference was that while the one was laughing, the others were crying When the mind is free you keep yourself happy, but if the mind is bound you remain unhappy wherever you are If you take it that God's will prevails in the world and by His will everything happens, you do not see any evil anywhere and there is no suffering for you at any time This is Ramdas' experience When God took him away from the old sphere of life and made him wander on the face of the earth as a mendicant with only one cloth, he was calm, cheerful and happy He had passed at that time through severe trials — hunger and many kinds of trouble — but he took every situation that came to him as willed by his beloved Master

God never means ill. He is always loving and merciful This is the attitude which Ramdas had towards all the trials which he passed through Then he found that it is not the external conditions that make us happy or unhappy but our own attitude towards such conditions. There are so many millionaires who have big houses, many servants and all the things necessary for material enjoyments, but all the same their lives are miserable. They go to Fakirs like Ramdas — wandering mendicants ever immersed in bliss and always smiling — and ask them where they get their happiness from They say, with all the comforts they enjoy they do not find happiness and want to know how they can get it Really, if you have found happiness within you, you are the King of kings, but if you have not found it you may be the emperor of the world but still you may be the most miserable man. Where is this happiness ? It is within you. A poor man

in a hut who remembers God is far happier than the man sitting on the throne who forgets Him. You think happiness eludes you like the will-o-'-the-wisp If you have discovered the fountain of happiness within yourself, what do you care for name, fame and wealth ? If they come, it is all right If they do not come, still it is all right Whatever depends upon external things is perishable, because the external things themselves are perishable Perishable things cannot give you lasting peace and happiness. The imperishable alone can give you true and lasting peace and that imperishable is within you

In every part of the world you will see the same eagerness to possess wealth, name and fame All these things can never grant you happiness. Therefore it is said, contentment is a divine virtue and a continual feast. If you have contentment you can always be happy, whether you sit on the throne or sleep on the foot-path External conditions do not affect you at all This is the supreme state which sages advise you to attain When you are striving to get things from outside for ministering to your senses, do you realise how much harm you are doing to your fellow-beings ? This spirit of selfishness and exploitation is causing all the chaos and conflicts in the world If you find happiness within yourself, you will never try to exploit others All such actions have their own reactions and they will rebound on you We can find peace within ourselves only when our actions are spontaneous, when they are meant for the good of everybody and are entirely free from selfishness

The Centre Vedantic Ramakrishna,
Gretz, France,
15th September, 1954.

"WHO IS YOUR RAM ?"

Questioner I should like to know something about the Ram you are speaking of Is it the historical Ram ?

Ramdas You have put a very difficult question because Ramdas' Ram is a wonderful Ram, so also perhaps the God whom so many saints and sages of the world have realised Ramdas feels Ram's presence at every moment of his life, but still he is unable to tell you what He is like. For instance, omnipresence is one of His attributes and to describe what this omnipresence is is not easy. One can feel it but cannot describe what it is like At the beginning when God wanted Ramdas to walk on the path of God-realisation, he started repeating राम (Ram), the simple name of two letters At that time he had a very hazy idea as to what Ram was His mind-waves gradually settled down and he enjoyed a certain measure of peace Later on his Guru came to him and initiated him into the Mantra "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram." He did not tell Ramdas the meaning of the word Ram, whether he was the historical figure, the son of Dasaratha, or whether he was the all-pervading God. After he started chanting the Mantra given by the Guru, within a very short time he reached a state of mental exaltation and elevation full of light and peace so much so that at times he used to lose himself in a supreme consciousness forgetting the body He was repeating the Mantra incessantly, almost throughout day and night

THE VISION OF LORD KRISHNA

One night when he was engaged in the chanting of the Mantra he saw before him the image of Lord Krishna. It was a wonderful vision He saw Lord Krishna standing before him with his flute in hand and dancing at the

same time. The charming figure fascinated him, but he knew the figure would not remain before him long but vanish, throwing him into a state of agony. So, at that time itself he prayed to Lord Krishna that he was not satisfied with this vision and that he wanted the universal vision of the Lord so that he could remain conscious of His presence at all times, behold Him everywhere and be ever in union with Him Ramdas asked for this because he had learnt in the Bhagavad Gita that the highest vision was universal vision after attaining which there was no fall for the aspirant He becomes one with the Divine — the very embodiment of the Divine. The Lord has said therein that after many births a man attains knowledge of the Self and after that he attains the vision of Vasudeva everywhere and such a state is rarely achieved This is the vision which Ramdas considered as the goal to be reached and he was longing for it So when Lord Krishna gave him a vision in his Avataric form Ramdas was not satisfied

DARSHAN OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

In response to his prayer He in a mysterious way took Ramdas to Thiruvannamalai where Sri Ramana Maharshi lived One morning after reaching Thiruvannamalai the Sadhu who accompanied Ramdas took him for the Darshan of Ramana Maharshi Ramdas went and stood before the Maharshi but the Maharshi did not say anything to him He however poured his wonderful grace through his eyes into Ramdas' which caused a thrill in his body and made him for the time being forget everything by raising him to a state of inexpressible ecstasy After Darshan of Ramana Maharshi God prompted Ramdas to go up the hill of Arunachala, a place where the Maharshi had lived for many years, performing austerities. Ramdas went up the hill and found a small cave in which he stayed for twenty days, all the time repeating the Mantra given by his Guru At the end of twenty days when he came out of the cave, he found his eyes filled with a strange light and he could behold everywhere the Divine in all His splendour and

glory, in the trees, in the stones and in all things before him He was so much fascinated by this vision that he cried out that he saw Ram everywhere He went about like one mad, embracing the rocks, the trees and even a passer-by there In this state of frenzy — it was nothing short of frenzy that seized him — he felt he had gained that vision for which he had prayed to Krishna whose Darshan he had in Mangalore As a result of that vision a veritable fountain of bliss was opened in him Since then he has been bathing in bliss He is immersed in an ocean of joy which is so vast and deep that it baffles all description The purity which was gained by Ramdas after that vision is unparalleled.

GOD IS EVERYTHING

He knew when he was made to enter the path, that he would, by the grace of God and through continuous repetition of His name, attain a high state of purity, but when he got it he found that every desire within him was completely destroyed and his heart became crystal pure He was filled so much with joy and love that there was no room for any impure desire or attachment This was something unimaginable He was completely divinised in body, senses, mind, intellect and every aspect of his being Thereafter he used to go about from place to place, extolling the greatness of God's name He told people who gathered round him that by repeating the name of God one could attain the highest spiritual eminence and realise the divine presence, joy and peace and that one's heart thereafter would surely flow out with love towards the whole creation without any distinction of race, caste, creed, colour or nationality Now the whole universe would stand transformed before one's vision as God Himself

There is a *mahavakya* in the Upanishads which aptly describes what Ramdas' experience is — सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म "Verily, all this universe is Brahman" Wherever you turn, it is He up, down, this side, that side and in all directions you have the vision of the Divine because

you have been made first to see the Divine within you. In the early stages of his struggle to attain Him he was oblivious of the world and he was lost in Him. After that experience he could behold the whole universe as the very expression of God He feels one with everybody.

THE LESSON OF THE HOUSE OF MIRRORS

In this connection Ramdas remembers an example given by Swami Ramatirtha In order to have some fun a man got innumerable small mirrors and had them fixed up in his room on the walls, in the ceiling and on the floor There was not an inch of space where there was no mirror After closing the door he switched on the light and stood in the middle of the room He saw himself reflected in myriad forms in the mirrors above, below and on all sides He enjoyed the sight very much because he loved to see himself everywhere After having had this fun for a while he left the room, but forgot to close the door His dog entered the room a few minutes later and it saw its own reflections in the mirrors. The dog started barking at its own reflections and started jumping and fighting with them, as it thought those dogs were different from it It fought till it got completely exhausted and fell down dead

So man in a state of ignorance, when fighting with other people, thinks that they are separate from him When he realises that all forms are the images of his own Self, instead of quarrelling and disliking them, his heart will pour out love equally to all of them It is then that the truth of Jesus' saying, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself,' is confirmed Loving your neighbour as yourself is not possible unless you know that you are not different from him If you have the vision of the Atman you see everyone as the manifestation of your own Self This is the supreme vision of the Divine everywhere, the vision of the Immortal manifested as the entire universe and all the forms, creatures and beings in it

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

To the question whether God is personal or impersonal, Ramdas' answer is that God is at once personal and impersonal. You can behold Him as everything and in everything in the universe. At the same time you maintain a close relationship with Him in his personal aspect. He becomes your constant companion. You can talk to Him, you can play with Him and you can even joke with Him. He will be so intimate with you. He will protect you in ever so many ways and look after you mysteriously. This is true not only in the case of a particular devotee, but is equally applicable to all devotees in all parts of the world who have surrendered their lives to Him entirely. In such cases He grants the devotees His universal vision and still remains their constant companion. So He is an Impersonal Person, that is, He is not only the all-pervading nameless and formless Reality, but He is also all that have names and forms. As your constant companion He guides you and looks after you just as a mother looks after the child. You feel His protection every moment of your life in a strange way. You can look upon Him as your father, comrade or master. How this is possible is very difficult to describe.

We have read such things in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He used to have Darshan of some living images of Divinity. He even played with them. But if you try to understand this by the help of the poor intellect, which has only a very limited capacity, you cannot comprehend how these things are possible. On the higher spiritual plane you can actually experience this. Ramdas himself is having that experience, but still he cannot tell you what that Impersonal Person is like. Very often Ramdas tells friends that Ram told him this and that. You will find even in his books how he had conversations with Him. People wonder in what way Ramdas talked to Him and how He responded to his feelings, impulses and talks. This is a wonderful thing, but it is there all the same.

GOD—THE UNERRING GUIDE

Ramdas remembers one thing, that all through his Sadhana God was guiding him in a mysterious way from the very beginning He knew it was God who gave him strength and it was by His grace he could boldly walk on the path, hold on to Him and attain the goal When the goal was attained he found that he was taken on the path unerringly God took him straight to Himself and gave him the all-comprehensive knowledge of Himself as personal and impersonal — as Purusha and Prakriti and also as Purushottama Purushottama — Purusha and Prakriti at once and beyond — is the all-comprehensive and all-transcendent Godhead God had taken him to this height and he found that He could be experienced in every aspect Therefore it is said that Moksha is of various kinds, and all are to be enjoyed simultaneously. You can see Him, you can be one with Him, you can be at the same place where He is and you can be like Him

SHIVA AND SHAKTI

In the course of his Sadhana he realised that continuous remembrance of God which the Hindus call Smaran, complete self-surrender which means offering yourself entirely to God and thus freeing yourself from the ego-sense, and the universal vision are all one and the same thing Constant remembrance of God does not permit of the continuance of the ego-sense persisting in you Self-surrender necessarily dissolves the ego-sense with the result that you come to know that you are not the body but the all-pervading static and silent Brahman This realisation at once grants you the vision of the whole universe as the expression of that all-pervading and static Brahman Then it is that you see everything as Brahman You realise that the manifestation is He and the unmanifest all pervading substratum of this manifestation is also He These two aspects you ultimately see as one, as they are not separate They are described as Shiva and Shakti. Shiva is the static aspect and Shakti is the dynamic aspect These two aspects co-exist and you see no distinction

between them. Now you are completely free from ego-sense and you become the embodiment of Divinity, your actions are the actions of the Shakti and you yourself are not the individual but the all-pervading Brahman.

It is said in the Bhagavad Gita that then you do actions as if you are not doing anything As Brahman you are inactive and as Shakti you are active So you act and at the same time not act This is action in inaction and inaction in action as the Gita teaches How these two can go together cannot be easily comprehended It was in this spirit that Arjuna was advised by Lord Krishna to fight He was made to know that he could do all actions in the battle-field and still remain as if he had done nothing at all, instead of abandoning the fight This is a great lesson as to how we should live and act in this world This requires the knowledge of the Purusha first. And then we do all actions as Prakriti and such actions leave no impression on the Purusha who is only a spectator inspiring Shakti to create, preserve and destroy As body we are Prakriti and as Atman we are Purusha If we realise this truth we can be free and still be active in the world Our actions will be of universal significance because they are done by the universal Shakti

TWO KINDS OF BHAKTI

Now Ramdas is going to speak to you about two kinds of Bhakti One is called Gauni Bhakti and the other is called Parabhākti Gauni Bhakti means preparatory Bhakti In this state the devotee forms a relationship with God and looks upon Him as master or mother and himself as servant or child He struggles day and night to remember Him constantly so that he may see Him In this effort necessarily his mind gets more and more detached from the sense objects There are so many alluring objects in this world and when the attachment to these is loosened, the mind is drawn more and more towards God and gets engrossed in His remembrance and meditation The struggle at this stage is very keen

So out of Bhakti springs Vairagya or dispassion, a kind of inner recoil from the objects of the senses which had held the devotee in bondage so long After he has gradually got himself free from the clutches of these low desires, he approaches the Divine through complete surrender Self-surrender brings about the union of the soul with God to such an extent that the devotee loses his individuality and identifies himself with and merges in the universal Spirit The result is he knows that in essence he and God are not different This is called Jnana, Self-knowledge or knowledge of Brahman

But, for the devotee this does not seem to be the end He wants to retain the Bhakti in him and wishes to maintain the relationship with God as master or mother Thus he reaches the state of Parabhakti in which he beholds the whole universe as the manifestation of his Beloved and looks upon Him as father, mother, friend, comrade or master and upon himself as child, friend or servant In this attitude he continues to have constant companionship, with Him even after attaining the vision of the Impersonal and the vision of the Universal In this relationship with God he retains a sense of duality with the sole object of enjoying the bliss of communion by talking, singing and hearing about Him

If you want to enjoy the bliss of love, there must be two When you lose yourself in the Divine completely and dissolve your individuality there will be nobody to enjoy the bliss of love If you become sugar itself you cannot know the taste of it You have to become the ant to taste the sugar and enjoy its sweetness So after becoming sugar you remain separate from it, become an ant and eat it

So also the devotee after realising oneness with God still remains separate from Him in order to express his love of God in various kinds of service This is considered by devotees as the highest achievement because the joy they get by this communion is so rare and sweet that it is beyond comparison with anything else, even with the joy of Moksha or liberation Therefore the devotee

says, "I do not want Moksha,—but I want to remain ever Your child". Moksha is not a thing to be attained but this relationship is an exalted and sweet acquisition. So the devotee remains separate from God just as Jesus felt "I and my Father are one; yet I am son of my Father." Ramakrishna Paramahamsa realised his identity with Kali in her impersonal aspect. Still he wanted to remain a child of the Mother as in that relationship he was able to enjoy bliss by talking so lovingly about her

WHAT IS GRACE?

Now Ramdas is going to speak to you a few words about grace Without grace nothing can be done by us. Many people think that we are doing everything by our own will and strength This is utterly false It is the divine grace alone, it is the divine power alone that is responsible for our doing anything Since we do not know that divine grace is working through us and we think that we are doing everything ourselves, all our actions, thoughts and feelings get vitiated When we root out the ego-sense and God's light and power flow in us, we become conscious that the divine power is responsible for all our movements and actions.

It is by God's grace alone that our mind turns towards God. We become conscious of His grace and that also is because of His grace. How can we otherwise remember God? We do not remember Him and are not conscious of Him for several years in our life and suddenly a day comes when our mind turns towards Him It is He who awakens us Some attribute it to our past Samskaras Ramdas can say this that by divine grace alone we are drawn towards Him It is rightly said by a devotee, "Oh God, I remember You because You remembered me first" If He had not remembered us first it would not have been possible for us to remember Him

So His grace must work in us so as to make us seek Him and ultimately realise Him. Even the first glimmer of the desire to find Him comes to us by His grace If we want to make His grace work with greater force in us

we must contact a saint, and accept him as our Guru. He teaches us that we are mere instruments and that God is the sole doer.

GOD-POSSESSION

When Ramdas started on his first pilgrimage he felt God had possessed him People asked him why he had to go Ramdas only knew it was all God's will. When this consciousness fully dawns, grace has descended on you in all its fullness, and you begin to feel you are nothing and God is everything This supreme state can be got through God's grace alone. God and Guru are not different Many people think that the Guru they have accepted is only a human being In fact God who has awakened you from within has come in a human form to guide you on the path, to infuse into you spiritual strength so that you may know the fulness and supremacy of grace Surrender comes automatically by grace

As the grace begins to work in you and as you become more and more conscious of it, your ego-sense leaves you just as darkness is dispelled by light. So grace comes to you from God within you and also from God without you God without is your Guru They are one and the same It is their combined grace that removes all obstacles on the way and dispelling all darkness or ignorance in you makes you an illumined being So grace is all that you need and you can get it by contact of saints In some cases when you are not awakened within, contact of saints awakens you In the presence of a saint you become a changed person From that time your only aim will be to realise God

So grace alone can save you. There is no other way Grace is so powerful that it can act on any person whether fit or unfit If fitness is the condition for the working of grace, it cannot be all-powerful, as in that case you can say you attain God by your own merit Grace must be so powerful that it must make the unfit fit to receive it So you can turn your mind towards Him through His grace alone, by the contact of saints Then God will

take you up just as the mother takes a baby up You have simply to cry, "Oh God, lead me towards You and make my mind always dwell on You". If you pray in this way grace is bound to come to you

OPEN YOUR HEART BEFORE SAINTS

If you are sincere and earnest in your aspiration for Him you will surely come in contact with a saint who will shower his grace on you and awaken you He will guide you on the path till you reach the goal. When you go to a saint, keep the window of your heart open so that his influence, his grace, may enter into you and dispelling darkness give you inner illumination You must be humble and guileless Then you will certainly receive the light that you seek

Ramdas felt after he received the grace of the Guru with the Mantra, that he was a mere automaton and some power within him was making him do everything He went all over India tossed about like a dry leaf Ramdas went with any person who called him and did anything that any person wanted him to do. He never cared to ask what sort of person he was and why and what for he wanted Ramdas to go anywhere or do anything He actually looked upon all as his beloved Ram Within and without he was seeing the same Beloved and he never felt he was doing anything by himself. Some higher Power or some higher powerful Being having possessed him and taken him entirely unto Himself, Ramdas felt that he was only an instrument

THERE IS NO BARTER IN GRACE

When grace came there was a sudden change in Ramdas' life which transformed him completely Grace did all things He never did anything to obtain or deserve grace Ramdas can tell you about the song of an Indian devotee who asked God, "Are you a merchant? You want me to perform Japa crores of times before you can give me Darshan You give me something in return for something This is barter If you are really gracious

you must shower your grace on me even if I do not do anything to deserve it" A man engages a labourer and makes him toil in his garden for the whole day. In the evening he pays him say 300 francs Can you call it grace? The man has after all paid the labourer only his wages If he tells the labourer that he pays him 300 francs as a mark of his grace, the labourer will retort that it is not his grace but only a recompense for his services If it is to be grace, it must be given even if the labourer has not worked for it Grace must spontaneously flow out of love and kindness We are not to toil for it Ramdas never felt he deserved it in any way When he received grace he knew it was only due to the compassion of God

SADHANA IS TO DISSOLVE EGO

Now the question naturally arises whether there is a place for Sadhana or effort on the part of the aspirant who is struggling to realise God Why should he undertake at all any spiritual discipline if everything depends upon grace, and grace alone can liberate him? The secret is that Sadhana is performed to know that by Sadhana we cannot attain God So long as the ego-sense persists we cannot reach Him The ego-sense it is that makes us struggle hard For instance, if we want to concentrate on God we apply so many methods and after all that struggle we find the mind is as restless as ever We sit for meditation but the mind wanders It may seem to be under our control for a second or two and the next moment it is somewhere else By this we come to know that by our effort alone we can do nothing

Then we surrender to God saying, "Oh God, I am nothing You are everything" We come to that stage by struggling hard for some time We let go the struggle and surrender ourselves to God and we get what we want The end of Sadhana consists in stopping the Sadhana in a state of perfect helplessness God is called Anatha Natha He can be our helper when we are fully conscious that we are helpless We become helpless only after

struggling for some time and finding that nothing is achieved Knowing full well our powerlessness we surrender to God

Who is struggling? It is the ego that struggles. By this struggle the ego knows that it is helpless and is nothing. It starts with the assumption that it will be able to be free by its own struggle. But it is soon disillusioned. Then it bends down before God and prays, "Oh Lord, I have come to you in complete surrender Deign to liberate me and grant me your Darshan"

A man for hitting a mark takes up his bow and arrow He fits the arrow on the bow and pulls the string to a certain tension and lets the arrow go Instead of letting the arrow go if he keeps pulling the string, the arrow will never go and hit the mark. He has to release it So also our struggle must cease after some time and we must surrender ourselves to Him. God assures us that if we go to Him in that spirit, He will surely liberate us and grant us His Darshan.

Saint-Leu-La-Foret,
France
16th September, 1954.

A STORM IN A TEA-CUP

Q. People are afraid that by the atomic experiments the earth may be blown up altogether Would that be a serious matter?

Ramdas When we look at this problem from the universal standpoint it is insignificant in view of the vast changes taking place in the universe comprising innumerable planets and stars much bigger than the earth itself When we look at it from the individual standpoint, that too from the human standpoint, blowing up of the earth appears to be a great catastrophe Judged from the cosmic point of view it is no better than a storm in a tea-cup In the universe millions of creatures are born every second and millions are destroyed at the same time Creation and destruction as willed by God are going on without cessation It is only the Divine at work in nature, and according to that law whatever is born must die, whether it be by war, by floods, by earthquake or by famines and epidemics We find destruction going on a gigantic scale in all the worlds The little wars that are taking place and the atom bombs that burst in the world seem to be very insignificant occurrences that affect humanity which is after all only an infinitesimally small group of life compared to all the unimaginably vast life in the universe

We take only human beings into account when we speak of the destruction of the world, but we do not take note of the innumerable creatures, animals, worms and insects destroyed every moment in the natural course We do not mind them at all as our calculations are all based on the narrow human standpoint When anything calamitous happens to human beings we are aghast because our identity with human beings is so deep that a vaster vision is denied to us. If we take the universe in its

totality nothing should terrorise us, not even the destruction of the whole earth by atomic explosions This is possible only when we identify ourselves with the universal Spirit and look at things with that vision If we indentify ourselves only with the body then the fall of an atom bomb is a terrible thing

GOD'S VOICE IS HEARD IN ALL SOUNDS

Q I had a funny experience When I woke up in the middle of night I found that I was repeating the Ram Mantra I was more surprised when I found that the mosquitoes were also repeating the Ram Mantra

Ramdas When the mind is filled with Ramnam we hear Ramnam in all the sounds Once when Ramdas was on an evening walk with a Maharaja, the Maharaja casually mentioned that when he was going on his morning rides he could hear "Ōm Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" in the sound made by the trot of the horse When our mind is filled with God we see God everywhere, we hear His name everywhere, and we always feel His presence

Q Is it possible to have the thought of God always under modern conditions of life?

Ramdas. It is quite possible if we only really aspire for God and make an attempt to keep Him always in our thought Here is a living example before you He belongs to the modern times and not to the past

Q If the earth happens to be blown up does that mean that the migrating souls will continue to be migrating in other parts of the universe?

Ramdas Yes They may continue to be born in other parts of the universe But there is no chance of the earth being blown up or anything like that happening God will not allow such things

PILGRIMAGE

Q What part did pilgrimages play in the Sadhana of Ramdas? If we follow him we will be tempted to walk from place to place.

Ramdas. Ramdas did not know in the beginning

why he was taken on pilgrimage by God, but afterwards he came to know that he was taken from place to place especially from one shrine to another so that his remembrance of God may be continuous He came in contact with many saints in holy places and this also helped him to keep his mind in tune with God To remember God constantly there should be proper environment and suitable company These two things were provided for Ramdas by God in his wanderings. That seems to be the reason for God having taken him on the pilgrimage. There are also people who go on pilgrimage with a light heart, but return with a heavy heart For such people pilgrimage does not do any good In this connection Ramdas will tell you a story

There was a great saint named Tukaram He was a votary of God's name Once some of the people from his village decided to go on a long pilgrimage and they requested Tukaram also to follow them Tukaram expressed his inability but requested them to be kind enough to take with them to all places they visited a bitter gourd that he would give. He wished that the bitter gourd should be given a dip in all the holy waters where they took bath and also taken to the temples which they visited Not caring to know the significance of what the saint said, the villagers took the bitter gourd from him and carried it all along their pilgrimage, obeying the instructions of the saint in regard to dipping it in the holy waters and taking it to the temples

In a few months the party returned from the pilgrimage and handed over the bitter gourd to Tukaram Tukaram was happy and invited all the members of the party for a feast the next day to celebrate the successful completion of their pilgrimage For the feast, in addition to various vegetable preparations, Tukaram made a special dish out of the bitter gourd which he had sent on the pilgrimage and which had come back to him All the pilgrims gathered for the feast The various dishes were served, and they started eating When they tasted the

gourd preparation they all remarked it was bitter and asked Tukaram why it was so. Tukaram, as if greatly surprised, asked them how it could be bitter when it was made out of the gourd that had performed the pilgrimage. He knew it was bitter when he handed it over to them before the pilgrimage, but wondered why it had not lost its bitterness in spite of the pilgrimage This was a great lesson to all the pilgrims

So there are so many who go on pilgrimage and return as bitter as before But if you go on a pilgrimage as urged by God within and continuously remember Him all through the pilgrimage and see only purity and goodness of God everywhere, you will be purified yourself and the pilgrimage will be beneficial to you

SUFFERING LEADS TO GOD

Q I have been sick for many years and more so for the last few months in spite of my constant prayer What is the meaning of such suffering?

Ramdas We can look at this question in two different ways If we are suffering as a result of what we did in the past, we have to bear it cheerfully and accept it as a necessary condition for our spiritual evolution Now we should take God's name continuously and live a life of righteousness because the sufferings came to us as a result of something bad done in the past It is a lesson to us that we should entertain good thoughts and do good actions so that we can at least avoid suffering in the future. There is another way of looking at it Have thought of God in the mind and as the thought merges in God more and more you will be able to bear the suffering cheerfully because suffering takes us to God In suffering it is that we remember Him more than at other times So we must take suffering as having come for our own good We must believe that suffering is given to us by God Himself in order to draw us towards Him

In this connection Ramdas remembers an incident in the Mahabharata Kunti Devi, the mother of the Pandavas, was separated from her sons when they had to go

to the forest in fulfilment of the vow they had taken She found herself thrown into a sea of sorrow and in that state she constantly took Krishna's name. After taking Krishna's name continuously for some time her mind became free from sorrow and a strange joy filled it and she was very happy. Remembrance of Krishna continued without break and she used to have moments of great exaltation When Krishna came before her and asked her what boon she would like to have, Kunti Devi simply replied, "Oh God, give me more suffering Give me more difficulties" At this Krishna asked her why she wanted more suffering when he was there to give her all the pleasures of life Then Kunti Devi said, "It is in my sufferings that I remembered you and became perfectly happy But for the sufferings, I would never have thought of you"

In the case of Kunti Devi she had to ask Lord Krishna for suffering, but in your case He has given you suffering unasked, which means God is very gracious to you What you should do is that you should remember God more and more and give up the body-idea or leave concern of the body entirely in the hands of God Let His will be done You may constantly remember Him and make your life blessed It is in suffering that we continuously remember God and pray to Him for His grace

The body is subject to destruction one day or other. If you worry about the body and not about the Soul, it shows that you are too much attached to the body which is an obstacle to your spiritual progress This does not mean that you should neglect the body You may take medicines and try to keep the body in a good condition But some diseases that come to us are not easily curable We have to bear these patiently without grumbling By God's grace they may be cured Even if the disease is not cured, God will give us the necessary strength to bear it However, our object should be to remember Him constantly, pray to Him and submit to His will

BODY CHANGES, ATMAN IS CHANGELESS

Q Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was a great devotee of the Divine Mother and had made total surrender to Her He suffered considerably in his last days Why was that ?

Ramdas When the same question was put to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa by his devotees, he told them that it was the body that suffered and not he The body is subject to birth, growth, decay and death This is true of every object in the world, whether the body is of a saint or of a common person who has not realised God The body is made up of five elements and at some time these five elements must disintegrate and dissolve into their respective elements. This is true of all beings in the world In the Bhagavad Gita there is a verse describing the nature of the Atman, our true being .

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥

"Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it,
water cannot wet it, and the wind cannot dry it"

So do not identify yourself with the body and think that with the death of the body you are also going to die This is a great teaching of the Bhagavad Gita and if we take it to heart we must be concerned not with the body but with the Spirit and ultimately realise that we are the deathless, changeless, immortal Spirit or Atman If we realise this we are free

Sri Ramakrishna knew that he was the immortal Spirit and that disease and death are only of the body Even in a state of utter physical agony, when he was asked why he was feeling the pain he said he was full of peace and bliss inwardly It is clear that even in that condition he knew he was the immortal Spirit He also remarked that the sufferings that he was passing through were vicarious because so many people who had diseases touched his feet. It is said he took upon himself the diseases and suffered for their sake. His disciples all over the world believe that he is an Avatar or incarnation

specially come to the world for the redemption of mankind There are instances in the lives of saints who had taken upon themselves the diseases of their disciples God willed that he should offer his body as a sacrifice, just as Jesus did, for the good of humanity

CHRIST AND RAMAKRISHNA ARE ONE

Q I am a Christian and I am deeply attached to Christ I am also greatly attracted by Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. However, I feel disturbed when I pay homage to them It rather worries me to take Ramakrishna Paramahamsa on the same level as Jesus

Ramdas Where is the harm in putting them on the same level? They are of the same, the supreme Spirit They are not different The supreme Spirit has manifested both as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and as Jesus When you revere Sri Ramakrishna you revere Jesus and vice versa Both of them came to the world for the uplift of humanity and they came from the same Source When you see the Source you do not see any difference between them Although they were born in different countries, their mission was the same

ALL PROPHETS COME FROM ONE DIVINE SOURCE

Q The human tendency to compare one with another is, I think, a hindrance on the spiritual path Is it not so?

Ramdas: We cannot but see difference on the surface, but many people, before they know that the Source of all incarnations is one, judge and compare two incarnations and try to find out who is true and who is not You will find in several religions men who are strictly orthodox in their outlook, looking upon their own prophet as the only true one and rejecting all other incarnations as false or as not capable of liberating humanity from ignorance and bondage This is a very narrow vision We have to tell such persons that all the great teachers, saints, prophets, and incarnations have come from one Source and that Source is impersonal. If you take it in this way and treat with respect and veneration all the

great prophets of the world, you will develop equal vision and love all human beings on the earth equally By loving so, you free yourselves from the individual sense and merge in the universal consciousness which is the goal to be reached.

Q: Can one use both the Ram Mantra and the Ramakrishna Mantra?

Ramdas It is better to use only one Mantra for our daily practice of concentration instead of chanting several Mantras And the Mantra to be repeated is the one which the aspirant received from his Guru.

WHAT IS SIN

Q: What about the Christian idea of original sin and fall?

Ramdas: Ramdas has read in the Bible the story in which is described the creation, the coming into being of Adam and Eve, how Eve was tempted by the serpent, how they fell and how both were driven out of the garden of Eden From that time it is said that the stigma of sin is attached to all human beings But later came Jesus who regained for us the lost kingdom of heaven or the lost paradise.

Ramdas remembers the grand poems 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained' written by Milton Paradise was regained after Jesus came and preached that love was the only way by which people could wipe away their sin and endear themselves to God and that God's grace could take them to that heaven in which they would have absolute peace and joy Here the original sin, whatever beginning it had, can be wiped out The sin of the ego in each one of us becomes evident after we have passed from childhood into boyhood We then develop the feeling of likes and dislikes and start a round of selfish activities which entangle us and cause misery and sorrow Impressions of the impure actions on the mind are the sins

Childhood is like heaven for us in which there is no desire, no illwill and no impurity. We are then so innocent and guileless. When we grow up and when the

o-called knowledge dawns, in other words, when we ave eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree, we have a all So after sometime we find that we are going the rong way and then having suffered for it we turn to-ards God and regain that lost innocence by complete urrender to Him and by His grace become His children ull of light, peace and joy This is regaining the lost aradise This is the way how we redeem ourselves by lis grace and attain a second childhood in which we emain ever blissful, peaceful and in union with the Divine. Ve reach the highest state wherefrom we never fall be-ause we will be then absorbed in the all-resplendent life f the Divine

This is how Ramdas looks at the question of sin. amdas can explain more clearly what he has said already dam and Eve were perfectly innocent at first but they ell after they ate the fruit of knowledge Now after a retty long period of ignorance or sin a human being egained his lost innocence and purity in the person of esus As a human being Jesus came to the earth to how to the world that what was lost could be recovered y human beings One can reach the spiritual state equal o that of Jesus and have no fall by standing firm against ll temptations even as Jesus did, and Jesus has also hown that in the ultimate state of perfection there is no ossibility of a fall One remains ever in the purity and ight of God Nay, one becomes the very God on earth t is not that we should merely remain followers of Christ but should raise ourselves to the stature of Christ.

FALL MEANS IGNORANCE

Q Why did the Hindu scriptures make no mention f the fall ?

Ramdas The original sin mentioned in the Christian criptures is the ignorance spoken of in the Hindu scrip-ures In the Hindu scriptures they say that ignorance s without beginning but it has an end So also the Christian scriptures say that one can get rid of the orginal in In both the religions it is said it can be done only y the grace of God So Ramdas does not see any dif-

ference between what is said in Hindu and Christian scriptures about ignorance or sin because Ramdas equates ignorance with sin There is difference only in the words used.

PURPOSE AND USE OF SUFFERING

Q Could you tell us why animals suffer?

Ramdas. Ramdas takes it that animals have also souls Some believe that animals have no individuality and they have only group consciousness. The souls of animals also transmigrate, they assume bodies after bodies and gradually evolve into human life. So if you look at the question from the standpoint of nature you will find that evolutionary change is the law of the whole creation When such changes are taking place in the external universe they are taking place also in the bodies of animals or human beings. If you look at it from this point of view you will find that the diseases from which the animals suffer are only changes in evolutionary process

The mystery of God's work eludes the grasp of our puny intellect The mind is ever creating doubts and is never satisfied with any explanation. There are wheels within wheels, and if we go deep down within ourselves we will have no doubt and we will see that everything is all right as everything happens by the will of Providence who always means well. So God gives suffering to animals so that they may evolve to the higher consciousness until they assume the human body in which they seek union with God and by attaining which they get the supreme state of immortality for which all living creatures are aspiring.

Q This suffering generally comes from bad action, also comes from simple mistakes, as for example, when we are in the sea and do not know that salt water is bad, we drink salt water till we know there is clear water near And for such simple mistakes we suffer

Ramdas You can give up looking at it from that point of view You can take it that suffering has come to us in order that we may rise above suffering by attun-

ing our mind with the highest Reality So long as our mind is in the lower plane we recognise suffering and we feel that it is something to be avoided But if we utilise suffering to raise the mind above suffering then suffering becomes a help, whether it has come as a result of bad actions or as ordained by Divine will In any case what we have to do is only to make proper use of the suffering Sufferings must raise us higher step by step to the Divine life

There are so many who try to avoid suffering They can never progress There are so many who have by contemplation of God freed themselves from the pain of physical sufferings When the mind is absorbed in God we are not affected by bodily suffering The great sages have taught us in this way In the Buddhist scriptures we find that the aspirants are asked to meditate on the *cause of misery* *They can get rid of misery by trans*-cending the mind, intellect, senses and the body and reaching the state of Nirvana or liberation So ignorance is the cause of misery and to remove ignorance should be our aim That can be done by making use of misery to rise above misery

There are so many who are overcome by misery so much so that they pray to God to remove misery which God has given them for their own good They must accept it as having come from Him for their own uplift and evolution We must never get attached to the body or think that we are the body and thereby subject ourselves to physical and circumstantial suffering

EXAMPLE BETTER THAN PRECEPT

Q How can we cultivate great Bhakti ?

Ramdas. The definition of Bhakti is intense love for God If you have got that you are a Bhakta and you are on the path of Bhakti

Q In the West many people are materialistic and are absolutely atheists and consequently suffer from it. How can we help them sufficiently to bring them back to the consciousness of God or even to the idea of God?

Ramdas By our attaining God ourselves and by giving them the benefit of our company Our company should create in them faith in God and we should not look down upon them Ignorance is the cause of atheism. Have sympathy and kindness towards atheists Love them in spite of their ignorance and show by your life that you have attained God, by being always kind and forgiving to all alike whether they are atheists or men of faith. If they are in difficulty, help them as much as you can Your loving attitude will gradually change their heart and they will know what a God-man is like They will also feel that they should have the same love that you possess. In this way they can be gradually brought round. If you seek to help or raise others you yourself must in the first instance rise above your lower nature and dwell in the higher, in which you can be in tune with God Example is always better than precept Live an ideal life yourself and by doing so, change the heart of others

ATHEISM IS NOT A SIN

The attitude generally adopted by those who are devoted to God towards atheists is not of the right kind They condemn and mock at them This must not be the case. There must be perfect tolerance because their lack of faith in God is only due to their not knowing the inestimable benefit one gains by loving or knowing God Atheism is neither a sin nor a crime Until we come in contact with a soul who lives in God it is difficult to have faith in God which alone can take us to Him At one time or other we have been atheists ourselves Later on a turn comes in our life, we change and become ardent devotees of God

This is true in the lives of most of us So the atheists may be at the cross roads and suddenly by contact with a saint they may change and turn towards God There have been many instances where a man who was living an irreligious life became a great devotee of God after coming in contact with a saint

RIGHT METHOD OF EDUCATING CHILDREN

Q What do you think of the present methods for educating children?

Ramdas As it is, we see more importance being given to teaching the children arts and sciences, but very little of moral and spiritual instruction is imparted in the schools all over the world So in every school spiritual and moral instruction based upon the essential teachings of all the great sages and teachers of the world must be given. In imparting this instruction matters that will create differences and conflicts should be avoided. Only the essentials of all religions such as belief in God, prayer and righteousness should be taught to the children They should also be taught to be kind and compassionate towards their fellowbeings These ideas must be instilled into the minds of the children together with the ideas of self-sacrifice and service to others

To be really serviceable to others it is necessary that they should be pure in thought, word and deed This purity can be gained only by communion with God who is all peace, love and joy, and children must be taught to do so every day so that they may get strength and inspiration to lead a true life. This must be the background of education in the schools. Without it the children may grow up into intellectual giants, eminent scientists, industrialists and so on, but they will be actuated in all actions by the motive to get power, name and wealth, with the result that they will create confusion and chaos in the world This in its turn will bring unhappiness and misery to the whole society. We see at present the entire atmosphere seething with unrest and agitation and it can disappear only when the growing generation is guided on the right lines so that they may contribute to the establishment of peace and harmony

BEHOLD DIVINE BEAUTY EVERYWHERE

Q. What do you say about the contemplation of beauty in the outside world as the way of attaining contemplation of supreme beauty?

Ramdas Beauty is inherent in every object in the universe, as the whole cosmic manifestation is the expression of the beauty of the Divine. We cannot look upon only one part of the manifestation as beautiful rejecting other parts as ugly. We must take the universe in its totality as the beautiful image of the Divine and love everything and everybody therein equally. When the eyes see with a limited vision they single out something as beautiful and something as ugly. We must rise beyond this vision into that infiinte vision which sees beauty everywhere — in all objects and things in the world This is possible only when our heart is filled with overflowing love towards all beings. Our love is given to the Divine. to the Divine in all His manifestations Then it is that we do not see ugliness anywhere in the world.

A mother who loves her child however ugly, considers it to be very beautiful because her love sees beauty in the child But if we divide our vision and see beauty in one and ugliness in another, it will not lead us to realise the beauty of the Divine who is all-pervading and immanent in every object

WHAT IS REAL BEAUTY

Q But will the artist endeavour to do something ugly? He will always try to make something beautiful

Ramdas. The artist's business is to synthesise the so-called beauty and ugliness and depict nature as it really is and not as he imagines it to be Even when he draws a picture he brings dark and bright shades in it. Dark shades, though to be avoided, are still used by the artist to throw into bold relief the bright side He draws palaces and huts side by side The artist works and reproduces everything, "holding the mirror up to nature" as it were. He takes things in totality. When he draws the picture of a leper it may appear to some people ugly, but for the artist who looks at things in a different light, it is as good as any beautiful picture he has drawn He is not taken by external appearance External beauty is illusive Two aritists themselves will differ in their appraisal of

such beauty One may say that a certain object is beautiful while the other may say it is not. This, as Ramdas understands, should be the true vision of the artist

The artist's sense of beauty is not only to see it on the surface but to look still deeper and see that absolute beauty is inherent in all things For instance, when he is painting a landscape he is absorbed in the task of reproducing it on the canvas He attunes himself with the Spirit underlying the landscape When he works in this way he loses himself in ecstasy. He does it in a state of yoga — union with the Spirit of beauty in each and everything Perhaps Ramdas has not made it clear though he has it in his mind and words cannot express the idea

Q: Art may be a prayer offered to Ram.

Ramdas: Then you can call anything art.

Q: What about beauty and ugliness then?

Ramdas: It is all mental. What is beauty for one is ugliness for another

Q: As you said everything can be taken as art then.

Ramdas: Everything can be taken as God That will solve the problem once for all.

PARTING MESSAGE

Q. What is your parting message to us, Swamiji?

Ramdas. Ramdas' parting message to you all is: "Let your lives be fully imbued with the divine consciousness so that you can live the true life by which you can elevate yourself and realise your immortal nature and also become instruments in the hands of God for disseminating love and goodwill towards all beings on this earth You can make your lives truly blessed when you live and act in the awareness of God within you Let God act through you and do everything through you so that your life may be utterly freed and made to realise its oneness with God, because the ultimate end of all life is to realise its identity and union with the Divine, both in the manifest and unmanifest aspects The manifest

aspect is the vast nature that we see before us, and in every particle of the manifested universe He dwells. It is truly said that He is in the smallest of the smallest and in the greatest of the greatest. It is also said, in the smallest He dwells in His entirety and not as a part.

We have been hearing so much about the atomic energy which, when released, can produce tremendous results because in the atom is involved universes. The omnipotence of the Divine is there hidden even in the atom, in the smallest particle of dust. As an example we can see how a small seed of a big tree like the banyan or the oak hides in itself the big tree, for when the seed sprouts it grows into a huge tree. If you collect all the seeds of that tree and bring forth more trees from them and if you go on multiplying the trees you can fill the whole universe with them *ad infinitum*. All this power of manifestation has come from one single small seed which counts for nothing.

So it is said in the Hindu scriptures that Pindanda is Brahmanda, the microcosm is macrocosm. This is evident from the vision which Krishna showed to Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. In the small human body of Krishna, he revealed innumerable universes to the vision of Arjuna. Again we find that when Krishna was yet a child his mother seeing that he had eaten mud, asked him to open his mouth and to her surprise she saw the entire universe in his mouth. It shows that in each one of us lies hidden universes, because the Soul, Truth or God within us, is not an individual entity but the universal Reality, cosmic or super-cosmic. This great Truth is dwelling in everyone of us. Let us live, move and act in the world, fully conscious of this great Truth and Power in our hearts.

So what we need is the consciousness—steady and unbroken—that we are one with this Reality. For this we should remember God constantly and dissolve the individual ego in the all-pervading, all-transcendent supreme Godhead — the one great destination which all have to reach."

FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE IMPERSONAL

Q. Are we developing too much personal attachment to you? If so how can we stop it?

Ramdas. You need not stop it You can make Ramdas a stepping stone to rise to the higher consciousness which is the real consciousness. You may attach yourself to him as a form and through that form reach the formless Very often some prop is necessary for us in order to walk on the path, and after we have gained sufficient strength we can throw off the prop and walk by ourselves We require a ladder to climb to some height and after we reach there we have no more need of the ladder So if you are attached to Ramdas as a form, let that form be a help to you to rise beyond all forms

In one of the Upanishads you will find that Yajnavalkya, a great Rishi, when asked by his wife for a parting message, told her how to truly love another He said "Love your husband not for the sake of the husband but for the sake of the Atman Love your father not for the sake of the father but for the Atman Love your brother, love your sister, love all your relations not for the external physical relationship, but for the sake of the Atman". Atman is all-pervading. It dwells in everyone of us If we love our neighbours or our relations knowing they are not separate from us in the light of the Atman, then we really love them in the true sense of the term If we are attached only to the external forms we are caught up in ignorance with the result that we are subject to fears, anxieties and worries born of likes and dislikes, mine and thine, and so on, because on the physical plane we are loving only those who are near and dear to us Beyond the circle of our friends and relations we do not consider anybody as belonging to us and we call them not ours So these ideas of mine and thine rise in our mind, and likes and dislikes follow Wherever there are likes and dislikes, there is pleasure and pain, as whenever we like and accept something we are happy and whenever we dislike and reject something we are unhappy.

So this kind of love is not the thing that we should practise Our love must be based upon our spiritual kinship with others So if you love Ramdas, love him for the sake of the great Truth that lives within him which is the same as the Truth that dwells within you all. Then you will be benefited by the attachment or love you have conceived for Ramdas If you take him merely as a body, you will not be deriving any benefit by your love towards him. Love should be the expression of your oneness with him in Spirit Physically we are separate, but spiritually we are one. In the awareness of this Truth, let us love everyone in the world Then we can get happiness for ourselves and give happiness to others because in our love there will not be any trace of selfishness.

Where there is selfish love there is pain and misery for the person who loves This kind of relationship on the physical plane is the cause of so much unhappiness in the world If we enter into ourselves and find the great all-pervading Reality, we cannot but love others, as in them also dwells the same Reality that is in us. Then our love flows out alike towards people of all sects, creeds, races and nations

EAST AND WEST ARE ONE

People ask Ramdas what difference he finds between the people of the East and the West This question was put to him after he had gone over three or four countries in Europe. Ramdas can tell you frankly that he does not see any difference because his vision is universal He sees God in all beings in the East and in the West. So you are all as dear to him as those with whom he has been moving closely from his childhood There is absolutely no difference Differences are only on the surface, but in the depths there is only oneness and unity If we pierce through the external veils of nature and go within and perceive the same Reality pervading everywhere, dwelling in the hearts of all beings and creatures. there cannot be any distinction between one set of people and another—people of one country and another. These differences and

demarcations are born of ignorance and are only man-made.

As embodiments of the same Spirit we are all one, wherever and in whatever condition we are, because the Spirit that is immortal is equally dwelling in the hearts of us all. So it is that we can envisage the dawn of world-brotherhood, looking upon God as our universal father and mother. We as His children should not have any difference among us. The fights, wars and discords in the world have actually no meaning, aiming as they do only at ephemeral power, wealth and glory. The material achievements appear and disappear like bubbles on the ocean. We strive to catch them and for a moment they seem to be in our grasp, but the next minute they vanish and turn to nothing.

Peace is the quest, nay, the hunger of every soul, and that peace can be had only by uniting ourselves with the supreme Truth pervading everywhere. We are fighting to put down others and think that by doing so we will be happy and peaceful. History also goes to show that from time immemorial fights and wars were going on with the ostensible object of establishing peace and harmony in the world.

It is indeed an irony that people fight in the name of peace. Real peace can be got only by going within ourselves and finding the great Reality, God. The quest is inward. But what the politicians are now doing is that they are trying to patch up differences on the surface. They cannot achieve any success by such methods and naturally there will be clashes again and again. All of them talk of peace and at the same time prepare for war. If we find the Truth within us we know that all this talk of peace and harmony in the world by adjustment of differences through conferences and pacts goes only to show the futility of our efforts. We are coining new formulae to convince each other, but there is no true conviction and the result is confusion all round, bringing misery to the world.

There is only one way out of the impasse and that

is for every individual to realise the great Truth that underlies the entire universe and thereby establish true harmony and goodwill on this distracted earth.

APPEAL TO ALL HUMANITY

Ramdas' appeal to you, friends of France, is that you should set about realising the Truth within your hearts and spread the glory of God everywhere and shed on all the people who come in contact with you the light which you have gained for yourselves. You can create thereby a truly peaceful atmosphere in and around you, which will scatter the war-clouds that hang over us. This is the humble appeal that Ramdas makes to you all This is not only to you but to all the people of the world. Ramdas is carrying this message with him wherever he goes He asks the friends everywhere to put their shoulder to the wheel so that they can realise the Truth and disseminate the ideal of universal love and service, because in the fulfilment of this ideal alone lies redemption, peace and harmony of the world As a preparation for this great task, Ramdas again requests you to rid your heart of all hatred so that God's light may shine in it and the waves of love may rise This love will enable the current of peace to pass from heart to heart and spread a peace-atmosphere all over the world and make wars and strifes impossible

We may contend that the war mentality is created by a few persons or by a set of people and that the general population are not in favour of it and are not responsible for it But this is not true Each one of us is responsible for the war mentality So long as there is hate and wrath in our hearts we directly or indirectly produce this war mentality and are setting up these leaders to enter into war

If we keep our mind calm and peaceful in the contemplation of God within us and learn to love one another, these very persons who want to wage war will disarm themselves and the war idea will entirely disappear from the mind of man So we must jointly try to produce

a peace atmosphere Each individual must do what lies in his power to create the atmosphere for peace and harmony in the world because individuals make humanity. So the responsibility lies on the shoulders of everyone of us either for war or peace We cannot blame anybody else We find now there is a cold war — a war of nerves. Even the peace-loving people are getting affected So we as individuals can create an atmosphere, and there will be a collective effort also made, for putting down this war mentality and restoring peace and goodwill on this earth.

FEAR COMPLEX

There is another weakness in us and that is we are seized with a fear complex We have become prey to fear Death holds terrors for us This is because we think we are merely physical bodies subject to birth, growth, decay and death To shed this fear we must realise that we are immortal and even if the body perishes we are not going to perish When fear leaves our heart we will remain in peace Otherwise fear causes agitation in our mind and we become restless We invite mishaps, calamities and catastrophies all from fear Our body-consciousness becomes so firm through fear that to take the mind off the body and fix it on the Divine within us becomes very difficult We must give up fear knowing full well that by the death of the body we do not die

Therefore, death is to the body and not to the Spirit within us A man who has really attuned himself with God is not at all afraid of death So it is incumbent on every one of us to be free from the fear of death This fear contributes a good lot to the present agitated condition of the world It adds fuel to the fire, as it were, because fear and hate go together. Where there is hate there is fear and where there is fear there is hate Both are born of the sense of diversity or duality or body-consciousness

In fact, you know that you are not the body. Otherwise you would not say, 'My body' When you say, 'My body', it clearly shows that you are not the body Still you identify yourself with the body and when anything happens to it you think that it happens to you Ramdas remembers to have read about a great Stoic philosopher Ramdas does not exactly remember to which country he belonged, but in fact, sages belong to all countries. His name was Epictetus He was a slave under the Roman Emperor and he was harshly punished by his master even for slight mistakes He was almost everyday beaten by his master One day for no serious fault of Epictetus, the master beat him so severely that his leg broke and he became lame After some time a friend of Epictetus, who lived far away, came to see him and finding him limping asked him how he became lame. Then Epictetus gave a characteristic reply, 'I am not lame, but my leg is lame' His detachment from the body was so perfect that whatever happened to it, he never thought, had anything to do with him

You say, 'My body, my senses' and so on, and still you think that you are the body. If you say, 'My coat,' it does not mean you are the coat. So also when you say, 'My body', it does not mean you are the body You are something that possesses this body and distinct from the body This 'I' which is separate from the body is all-pervading and eternal Be conscious of that When death comes to the body you can boldly declare that it is the body which perishes and that you do not die This 'I' within you is the all-pervading cosmic 'I' Your indentification with the body is the greatest blunder. When you detach yourself from the body you know who you really are You are not the individual but the cosmic Spirit, all-pervading, omniscient and eternal You have only incidentally assumed this body for playing a certain part in the world and after having played the part you will throw it off, as you doff a coat after you have used it for some time and do not find any more use for it So, fear should have no place in you It should certainly

leave you When you are fully conscious that you are the eternal Truth, you are completely free from all fear.

TWO KINDS OF FAITH

Q Can you say something about faith, not in its emotional aspect, but in its constructive and vertical aspect?

Ramdas Faith is of two kinds We place faith in God, relying on the words of saints who have seen or realised God This is one type Another type is born of direct perception or experience of God Before we have experience of God, it is good to have faith in the words of a spiritual Master who has realised God If we follow his advice as to how we can realise God or see God for ourselves, it will be easy for us to attain Him Thereafter our faith in Him will be of a different nature It will be the outcome of not merely an intellectual acceptance based on the assurance of another, but of our direct experience or vision of God. We will know definitely that God is and that we can ever trust Him

SIMPLE FAITH IS THE BASIS OF TRUE LOVE

Q. What relation is there between hope and faith?

Ramdas Ramdas remembers having read a book called 'The Greatest Thing in the World' It begins thus 'Which is the greatest, faith, hope or love? Love is the greatest'

Q When it reaches this height, is love or charity something different from faith and hope?

Ramdas Love is the fulfilment of faith and hope. In India there was an old illiterate lady who had very great devotion for God She had a Pundit or a Sanskrit scholar engaged to read out to her in Sanskrit the story of Rama She used to sit daily before the Pundit and hear patiently for an hour or two the reading of the Ramayana although she did not know the meaning of a single word, as she did not know Sanskrit She knew only that the story of Rama was being read, and her faith in God was so great that the mere hearing of it gave her the necessary inner strength, peace and joy. The faith then

fructified in her life in the form of charity. Her husband was a retired Superintendent of Police at that time.

One day at the gate of his big house a strong and healthy young man came and begged for alms. He pleaded that he had no means of livelihood since his recent release from prison. He wanted only a meal from that house. The master of the house the retired Superintendent of Police, knew very well that the man was a hardened thief, had committed many thefts, had gone to the jail several times, and he himself, while in service, had sent him to prison. Now he told the beggar that he could not get anything from there and asked him to go away. As he was wellknown as a thief, there was no chance of his getting a job and he was going hungry. Somehow driving the man away from the gate, the retired officer went inside his house.

After a few minutes he came to the kitchen at the back and, to his surprise, found the ex-convict he had driven out, sitting on the outer verandah and eating food. He asked his wife why she should feed such a vagabond. She replied that the poor man was very hungry and so she wanted to feed him. The master explained to her that he was a thief and did not deserve any help. To this she gave a simple reply. 'I do not know whether he is a good man or a thief, he came to me hungry, my duty is to feed the hungry. That is all I know.' This simple reply silenced him and he quietly walked away to his room.

Many people think this is misplaced charity. It is not. Her heart was overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and that love, expressed itself in giving food to him. It was the purest love, compassion and charity. So faith, if it is real, will reveal itself in this form of love or charity.

A STORY

Once a poor man approached King Yuddhishtira, who was also called Dharmaraja, which meant the king who strictly followed the path of virtue. When the poor man asked him for help, Yuddhishtira said, "Come tomorrow.

I will give you what you want ” His brother Bhimasena overheard this and at once ran to the place where there was a big bell hanging, and which was rung only when any great victory was achieved, or on certain great occasions Bhimasena straightway rang the bell It created great commotion everywhere because the ringing was sudden and people did not know of any great function or victory They all came out to ascertain the reason Yuddhishtira was also surprised Report came to him that Bhimasena had rung the bell Bhimasena was called and asked for an explanation He replied, “We have gained a very great victory today, victory over death for twentyfour hours Dharmaraja told that man to come tomorrow, saying that he would then give what he wanted That means till tomorrow Dharmaraja is not going to die He has triumphed over death This is indeed a great victory ” Yuddhishtira was awakened He called the man back, gave him what he wanted and sent him away without waiting for the next day

BELGIUM

BRUSSELS, 17th September, 1954.
Place Residence of Mr Luc Haesaerts.

SCIENCE WILL STUMBLE UPON THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT

Questioner Can you say something about spirituality and science? In what way is spirituality related to modern science?

Ramdas So far as Ramdas understands, science has progressed now to the extent of asserting that matter is energy This is a great discovery and the time will come shortly for the scientists to say that energy is Spirit That will be the next step forward When they go to the length of establishing that matter and energy are one and the same, they have definitely gone a long way We believe that there is a Divine Power or Shakti pervading everywhere in the universe, and that Shakti is responsible for all the manifestations that we see before us So the forms are nothing but the expressions of energy The scientists have also come to the same conclusion One more step and they will stumble upon the realm of the Spirit They will say that there is an all-pervading silent Spirit at the basis of this manifestation, from which the whole universe has sprung forth

So scientists are gradually coming to that stage where they will find that the discoveries made by the intellect are bound by certain limitations and that they should go beyond these limitations This is possible when they make researches into the Spirit or in the spiritual realm, which can be done only by stilling the mind The mind cannot reach there Only when one goes beyond the mind one can get the experience of the higher Truth Scientists will surely get it because, after churning the mind for some time, they have to give some rest to it, and when the mind is at rest they will experience the Truth Then they will declare that the supreme Spirit is the support of the universe.

Recently Ramdas read a book called 'Man the Unknown' The author seems to be a great scientist and he has explained, in the terms of science, some Biblical teachings and proved that whatever has been said in the Bible is perfectly scientific He himself was at one time a non-believer in God and he came to believe in Him when he applied science to religion and came to the conclusion that behind the physical universe there is a Spirit, which we call God, Truth, Nirvana, and so on, according to the religion to which we belong Scientific discoveries will lead the scientists ultimately to the realisation of the immortal Spirit — God This is inevitable because just as in the physical plane there is evolution, there is evolution also in the mental plane Mind in its ultimate quest will transcend itself and stumble upon the realm of the Spirit to which the mind, the senses and the intellect cannot get access

IT IS NOT SHUNYA

Q A man of science is generally a materialist You said just now he should go farther than mental Is that stage Shunya ?

Ramdas It is not Shunya It is the impersonal aspect of the Divine. God has two aspects, personal and impersonal The impersonal has no form, change or movement, but He is still the all-pervading, radiant Spirit, in whom we can merge and thereby liberate ourselves from the clutches of the flesh As it is, we are too much in the grip of the flesh and we must detach ourselves from it and realise that we are the immortal, all-pervading Spirit God is at once formless and with form

TO TEACH OTHERS TO BE GOOD, BE YOURSELF GOOD

Q My daughter wants to know how all the birds come very near her and she loves them very much She is very kind to them There are many who like the birds, but still there are many who do not like them, but kill them. Is it right ?

Ramdas We can convince them not by telling them to be good, but by becoming ourselves good By follow-

ing our example people will stop killing birds and will start liking them

Q. People are prepared to fight all over the world, and there is no good preaching

Ramdas. As Ramdas told you just now, the solution rests in our perfectly loving everybody If we set the example, we will make others also free from hatred. Example is better than precept. Ramdas does not go and preach voluntarily to everybody, but when they put him the question he tells them that there can be peace in the world only if we love one another. By so doing we get peace for ourselves and share it with others. We have to eradicate ill-will and hatred from our hearts Then only we can love others in the true sense of the term and by such love develop harmony in our hearts and harmony outside us.

There are many people who want to love, but they do not know how to do it. If they are told that if we learn to love one another we will be really happy and that our unhappiness or discontent is due to our lack of love for our fellow-beings, they cannot easily understand. Love is the only remedy for doing away with all thoughts about war, discord and strife At present our mind is not full of love, but of confusion If we concentrate on love, we will gradually create an atmosphere of love around us and those who come in contact with us will also learn to love, and there will be waves of love spreading harmony and peace in the world

HOW TO CULTIVATE LOVE

How to cultivate this love is the question. We must seek the Source of life by attaining which we can really love one another That source is God or the great Reality within us A man who has found God within, truly loves all because he sees in all the same God There is a saying in the Bible, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' This is one of the greatest teachings of Jesus On what basis can you love another unless you have dived deep into yourself and found that you and he are one? The same

Spirit that dwells in you dwells also in him And this oneness of the Spirit makes you automatically love another as yourself If you want to love another as yourself, then you must see something common in both of you Intellectually and physically you are different from others But still there is something common between you and them, and that is the universal Spirit which we call God Truly, we are all manifestations or forms of the one Divine Spirit, and in the light of this knowledge alone we can truly love one another, giving up our petty spirit of exploitation, ill-will and hate

People are busy finding out ways and means to bring about peace in the world So many conferences are being held and pacts are entered into, still the situation remains the same Then, where is the way out of the difficulty that confronts us? How to dispel the cloud of war that hangs over us? Everybody seeks to solve the problem, but there is no solution found We are in despair and are getting nervous Intense fear has seized us That does not help matters We do not know what part to play in order to bring peace and goodwill in the world If we talk about love we must first practise it ourselves If God has given us the power to love others as we love ourselves, then we should make use of that power Unless we see the Divine everywhere and can look upon all as our own Self, we have no right to speak about love

Our love must transform those who come into contact with us Preaching is not always necessary But there is a way by which we can commune with another and seek relationship with another, recognising the kinship of the Spirit If we transmit love from person to person, country to country, and nation to nation, then we will be able to create what is called world-brotherhood This is essential now to stem the tide of war that threatens to overwhelm us

START A CURRENT OF UNIVERSAL PEACE

Q. Shall we have a day when we have such type of peace in the world?

Ramdas Ours is to strive for peace and in such striving we will find true joy. When we try jointly, through our prayers to God, to bring about peace in the world, by His grace peace is bound to come We must rise superior to our petty jealousies in order to avert discord and war But what we find now is that people have no faith in God. Really God is not far away from us. He is within our heart and He is absolute peace. When we tune our mind with Absolute Peace, we attain peace and naturally create an atmosphere of peace around us Individual as well as collective effort is necessary. Individuals should try to find peace within them and all such individuals in all parts of the world should jointly try to bring peace by spreading the message of peace, and it will definitely have its effect. Though the entire humanity may not join, let a small percentage of it at least take part in this It will gradually transform others who are not at present in favour of this movement because man's nature is developed according to the influence of the company he keeps If we are true to God within, and love our fellow-beings equally, by our contact they will also be inspired to do likewise, and in this way we will be able to start a current of universal love and peace, which will neutralise the antagonistic forces of discord, strife and war.

YOU ARE THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

Q What about fear of death?

Ramdas You must get over the fear by becoming conscious of God — knowing you are the immortal Spirit You are not going to die Fear of death is a weakness and this weakness gives rise to so many other evils When there is fear, there is no peace Now you create an environment of discontent agitation and disorder If you have attained peace for yourself, you can spread it and even those who are mentally restless will be able to enjoy it in your company So you will be transmitting peace waves to every one who comes in contact with you

What you have to do is to draw your mind inward and realise peace by communing with God who is

absolute peace Be like a generator of peace and distribute it everywhere To heal the sorrows of the world and to remove the existing unrest in it, there is the need of a continuous flow of such peace from every one of us In fact, you have not to become but have only to realise the divine power You ignore the source of this power and do not think of it at all. On the contrary you think that you are only the body, subject to birth and death You are deathless, immortal Spirit Death is only to the body Take your stand on the rock of the immortal Truth which is your real existence Then you cannot but radiate love, light, peace and joy everywhere

You are denying that Absolute Peace, which grants you all the strength required to combat the evil desires and, by triumphing over them, to attain everlasting happiness which the soul hungers for You have to awaken this aspiration in the hearts of all others Of course, one who has realised this happiness can alone do it Have you not before you the example of Mahatma Gandhi, a simple man who drew the whole of India to follow him It was done by his soul power, the power that came from the depths of peace He is an example before the world — a man who used soul force for the right purpose and in the right manner. The soul force set free from the hearts of every one of you with the object of gaining world peace can work wonders Mahatma Gandhi said that he could guide people on the right path, because he was constantly in tune with the Divine This is possible not only for him but for everyone of you In the hearts of every one of you the Divine dwells But you are not aware of Him How can you then draw from Him the power to raise yourselves and help to raise others?

TO AVERT WAR IS IN OUR HANDS

Q We want to ask you so many questions, but we do not know how to ask We are rather afraid and will it not be nice if you tell us something, of your own accord? What we find is that although there is spiritual progress, the fear of war is still there

Ramdas: Who is responsible for war? Ourselves, are we not? All of us directly or indirectly contribute to the creation of the war mentality. So every one of us should strive to attain peace individually and then there will surely be universal peace, and war will be impossible. We know the remedy very well, still we do not care to make use of it.

Q: Is there a hope to find peace for humanity, because so far war and all the bad things have always lasted?

Ramdas: There is surely hope, provided we apply the right means for creating peace and preventing the recurrence of war.

GOD NEVER CREATED EVIL

Q: Is evil not part of the creation, because evil and good have so far existed?

Ramdas: When love prevails, evil disappears. When we tune ourselves with God, discord and war disappear. Because we are divorced from the great Love that dawns by union with God, we have created this condition. If we turn our mind towards Him, who is love, we can dispel the war clouds that are hanging over us and thereby establish peace and goodwill on the earth. It lies within us to have war or no war. If we have the vision of God, we cannot see any evil. Evil is of our own creation. It is not God's creation. A man who lives in harmony with all beings has conquered evil. Don't you see some people who have conquered and risen above evil, and who behold goodness alone everyhere? Goodness alone is real, as evil is only the offspring of the ignorant mind. If we accept the sovereignty of God by surrendering ourselves to His will, we will love all alike, and see no evil at all.

OPEN YOUR HEART TO RECEIVE GRACE

Q: I wonder if good does not exist simply as contrast to evil. Is the world of peace possible at all? For that purpose, will it not be necessary that the human being

should be transformed gradually so that they can understand and reach that love you are talking about?

Ramdas They must open themselves to the influence of the Divine Spirit Then the transformation is possible If they shut the doors against such influence, they will remain as they are and will be creators of evil in the world If they want to create peace they must hearken to the voice of the Spirit within. Supposing you want light inside your room, you have to open your windows If you keep all of them shut, the light does not come in God's grace is ever pouring on you, but you have not opened the windows of your heart to receive the grace. It requires faith in the Divine Power to receive His light and His grace

GOD IS LIGHT — EVIL IS DARKNESS

Q: Does evil disappear automatically?

Ramdas Yes It disappears when you approach God, just as darkness disappears when you go nearer light. When you are in perfect union with God, it completely disappears Of course, in the early stages there is a keen struggle, because darkness strives to persist Darkness is born of your feeling of separateness from God You have denied Him, so you do not pray to Him or contemplate on Him So evil is self-created As soon as you are united with Him, evil has no place in your life and you bask in the light of God. Darkness of ignorance is unreal, but light of Truth is eternal

Q *In nature things are not perfect It is impossible to take the darkness away When you try to do so, you always fight with darkness In nature darkness always exists It is impossible to open the door to light if there is no darkness You are talking only of men, but I am talking about all the creatures In this way we find darkness and light, and to take darkness away it is impossible We cannot have joy without sorrow Even if we can, it would be monotonous The great joy of life is only possible if there is darkness. When we think about nature, if we*

are like you mystical, then there will be light everywhere But with the nature it is impossible We know and believe that darkness and joy are mixed

Ramdas: This darkness is created by man. Even though there is light everywhere we do not see when we close our eyes We say it is all dark Here we ourselves have made darkness. If we open our eyes there is light everywhere So also God, the eternal light, is everywhere. We shut our eyes and say there is darkness If we open our eyes we will see God and His light everywhere.

"GOOD OR EVIL, THINKING MAKES IT SO"

Q Common people like me see things imperfect, and nature has its opposites. Is it not true?

Ramdas: Ramdas will tell you about the conception of darkness and light If you go deep into the matter and transcend reason, you will realise that good and evil are merely conceptual What is good for you may be bad for another, and what is light for you may be darkness for another. So there is no standard of darkness and light in nature for you, when you look from a lower plane Good and evil are simply standards set by the mind There is a state beyond the mind in which there is no good and evil This is the absolute plane from where you see the whole world filled with one light and one power.

In the lower or relative plane, your standards of right and wrong, light and darkness exist, but they vanish entirely when you transcend the relative and reach the absolute. From the absolute standpoint you do not see nature as separate from the Divine. You see oneness everywhere Before you attain this state you are like a pendulum moving betwixt light and darkness, good and evil, joy and grief Now you laugh, next moment you weep — a victim to the pairs of opposites. If you transcend this lower nature and dwell in the higher divine nature, you will find the whole world pervaded by divine light and you are no longer affected by the pairs of opposites This is what the religious leaders, the sages and saints, have

taught us from their experience If you also strive, you can attain that state in which there is neither sorrow nor death

SOME SCIENTISTS HAVE REALISED THE COSMIC TRUTH

Q Do you think that scientific knowledge is in opposition to this knowledge?

Ramdas. No, it is not at all so

Q Is the power of science an obstacle to spiritual attainment?

Ramdas No, it is not After making researches in the field of nature, some scientists have ultimately transcended nature and have entered the realm of the Spirit. Ramdas has read the lives of some scientists who have reached that stage. Researches into nature do not satisfy them They go deeper and ultimately reach the Divine Spirit which is at the basis of nature Then they get the faith in the Divine and know that by union with Him alone man can fulfil his spiritual destiny So science, instead of being an obstacle on the spiritual path, decidedly becomes a help It is perfectly true that in the early researches into nature scientists conceived a kind of scepticism regarding the spiritual values of life But as they advance they come to believe in the existence of the Spirit, because at a certain stage they are baffled, and they cannot grasp the mystery underlying the psychical and physical phenomena. Their microscopes and the test-tubes may give an insight into the phenomenal nature, but there are certain subtleties in the working of nature which do not in any way come within the domain of the intellect So when they are baffled, they probe deeper and rise higher, and discover the source from which this vast universal manifestation has evolved, and at last experience their union or oneness with the Divine Cosmic Truth or Reality

THE MESSAGE OF GITA — INTEGRAL YOGA

Q. I feel that disharmony in the world is due to the fact that intelligence, love and action are considered

opposing one another. The spiritual ideas of India and the philosophical ideas of America, do you think, can unite these three elements? Is the uniting of intelligence, love and action not the solution for harmony?

Ramdas. You are thinking on the right lines You see there are three functions—of the intellect, of the heart and of the body. Intellect thinks, heart feels and body acts. In the Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus, there are three Yogas described They are Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga The Bhagavad Gita teaches us that one attains union with God through knowledge, love and action These three must develop together so that we can unite with God through the divinisation of intelligence, love and action This is called integral Yoga Our minds must be in tune with the infinite and eternal Intelligence and our love then flows spontaneously towards the entire humanity because humanity is the expression of that infinite. When we have love towards everybody, actions will naturally be done as inspired by that love. If our actions are all dedicated to God, done in His name, then we have acted in conformity with the pure love that rises in our heart

The trouble at present is that in many countries, people are highly intellectual They have no love in their hearts Action is there, but it is done in a state of ignorance and governed by the ego The Indian sages point out that the way to realise supreme happiness and harmony lies in the illumination of the intellect, the purification of the heart and the dedication of our actions Now you will be able to integrally attune yourself with the Eternal within you.

So what you say is perfectly right We need not speak only of America here This applies to every country The weakness is there in us all. Our intellect works only on the surface and has not entered deep within to see the Divine So intellect has not been helpful to us, as it does not indicate the right direction Love has not dawned in our hearts, because there is attachment. We love certain people because they are our relations and

friends We consider others as outsiders and strangers, and we do not love them True love freely flows towards all alike. The body is toiling day and night for our individual comfort and of those related to us, but we are not at all concerned about the happiness of others. So our vision is narrow, our love is selfish and our actions are tainted Thus we create an atmosphere of strife and disharmony around us We must get over this It is a defect in us — individuals And nations are made up of individuals If we liberate ourselves from the clutches of selfishness and expand our vision, our life will become blessed because it will then pour out love, kindness and service spontaneously to all alike

GOD IS WISDOM, LOVE AND POWER

Q Are there not techniques to join the intellect, heart and action?

Ramdas They develop together They are three parts of the same being In meditation you indentify yourself with the Divine within you, your heart overflows with love towards all alike, and your actions are selfless and are done for the relief of the distress of others whether they are your relations or not It is in the impure heart there is attachment, but when your heart becomes pure by constant remembrance of God, there is no more attachment in it and it overflows with pure love towards the entire humanity

So these three paths of Jnana, Bhakti and Karma go together They are shown in the Bhagavad Gita not as different Yogas but as one synthetic approach to God, because God is not merely a silent and static Spirit, God is all love and sympathy for the suffering humanity and He is also God of Karma or action, and His power works through the body for the good of others God is eternal wisdom, God is infinite love and God is almighty power These three are the attributes of God

MEDITATION LINKS YOU WITH GOD

Q What is the importance of meditation? Can one progress without meditation? Is it, after all, very

necessary on the path of spirituality ?

Ramdas Let us try first to understand what meditation is Meditation means uniting yourself with God through a mental discipline The object of meditation is to keep your mind in tune with Him and to realise Him. Meditation is therefore a necessary spiritual discipline before we can realise God We remember God constantly through prayers, and when the mind becomes more and more concentrated, it merges itself in meditation into the divine Being within us and we feel one with Him

Remembrance leading to meditation enables you to feel the divine Presence Meditation links you with God. God-thought should alone fill the mind until it becomes still and it is now that you realise your identity with the supreme Reality So you cannot leave off meditation from spiritual discipline

Q Meditation and concentration are necessary only two or three times a day, or as many times a day as possible ?

Ramdas As many times as you possibly can

GOD-THOUGHT PURIFIES YOU

Q You say there is a world beyond goodness and badness Can we realise that world everyday and every minute perfectly or is it only a constant struggle ?

Ramdas At the very start we cannot realise it. We have to struggle on the path Self-purification is necessary in order to attain that vision and experience in which we see the world as nothing but the manifestation of the Divine. Before we get this experience we are obsessed by the pairs of opposites — good and evil, etc. At first you must take it that anything that takes you near God is good and that which takes you away from God is bad After you have realised God, there will be no such thing as good and evil for you, and your love goes to everyone good or bad alike, and your sympathy is for the whole humanity and your actions are for the good of all But till then you do have the conceptions of good and evil.

Imagine you are assailed by bad thoughts like those of lust, greed and anger You should consider them as evil thoughts, because they lead you away from God, and so you must conquer them These thoughts must be substituted by positive thoughts of love, kindness and mercy We cannot get nearer God unless our mind becomes pure, free from lust, greed and wrath. These evil thoughts can disappear only by constant remembrance of God. Ramdas found this technique the best It is very simple; you have only to remember God constantly, and all bad thoughts will disappear at once

Attune your mind with His glorious name The name of God has wonderful powers Each devotee may take any name of God which he holds dear Let him repeat it with all love and see its wonderful effect on the mind The mind becomes calm and silent within a short time

FIRST GOD AND THEN WORLD SERVICE

Q Is the realisation of absolute peace and love possible in this life for everyone?

Ramdas Yes Realisation of absolute peace and love is possible in this life, and it is attainable by everyone if only he strives for it

Q Can one strive individually, and seek peace and love individually? When we learn history and look backwards we see that collectivity has always swallowed up the good individual efforts even though some individual struggled to reach good

Ramdas In spiritual matters, organizations, societies and movements are not of much avail Each one must raise oneself to the divine status by one's own efforts — acts of self-discipline, concentration, meditation and surrender These are to be achieved by one's own individual struggle in order to ultimately unite oneself with God Collectively this cannot be done By joining a society one will not be benefited in any way in rising from the human nature to the divine nature But after attaining that state, one can join others in their activities to bring happiness and joy to the world

It is not advisable for a spiritual aspirant to start collective activities in organized institutions, in the name of humanitarian service, before he realises God By communion with God one must develop love for all beings, and that love must inspire one's activities. Otherwise in the name of God we will be exploiting others instead of helping them Without having achieved peace for ourselves there is no use of our joining together with the aim of bringing peace to others. If we do so, we will be only working for our selfish ends A beggar cannot render help to anybody. A man of wealth alone can do it So also a man who has gained peace can alone give peace to others. Individual peace helps in producing world peace and that is the only way.

TO BE SERVANT OF GOD IS THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Q Is there not a possibility of selfishness lurking in every action for others?

Ramdas Unselfish action is possible only when our *mind is completely merged in God That is the criterion* for right action Our actions get contaminated, because our heart is not pure There is pride lurking there We may be doing things ostensibly for no personal gain, but there may be a subtle desire for name and fame We often do an act of charity expecting our names to appear in the papers There are some who do charity without expectation of any reward The attitude can come only when we feel that we are the humblest servants of the Divine and that He, seated in our hearts, is making us do everything

BRUSSELS,

18th September, 1954

BE ESTABLISHED IN THE INNER CONSCIOUSNESS

Q In meditation it happened to me once that I suddenly discovered the absolute identity of all human beings, animals, plants and even minerals. This continued even when I was walking amidst crowds of people After that when I came back to the consciousness of the ego, I have been wondering to find out an explanation for the state after death, where the ego has disappeared completely, and we return to the source we come from As an explanation, the idea of many electric lights in one line strikes me, where the power that works one lamp cannot oppose the other

Ramdas: Your experience is right In meditation you have discovered the true meaning of the world manifestation. All the names and forms have at their basis the one eternal, all-pervading Spirit You have found out the essence, the truth or life principle of all existence The diversity that you see is only on the surface In the depths there is only one existence out of which the manifold names and forms have come forth This is the experience you have gained when your ego-sense vanished. When it came back, you began to see diversity again, the unifying experience having disappeared Your experience shows that you have a glimpse of the Truth After repeated trials you will be able to establish yourself in it and maintain the awareness of the Reality, even when you are engaged in ordinary activities of life

KILLING FOR FOOD IS INEVITABLE

Q In the life there is always strife Even when we are walking we are killing many insects Is there something to be done to avoid this strife in life?

Ramdas You might have heard about the discovery of the great Indian scientist, Sir J C Bose He found out that the entire world before us is teeming with life There is life and emotion in plants, and even in apparently inanimate objects. When you cut a plant you are killing

life J. C Bose has shown by experiments that plants possess similar feelings to those of animals and human beings When a plant is happy or in pain, we can clearly know its different emotions We do not feel like killing any life for any purpose. It will thus be impossible for us to live in this world Even when we cut vegetables, we know we are killing life That means we cannot use vegetables We cannot break stones, because there is life in them. It is difficult to live, if we look at the problem from a purely non-violent point of view

It is said that for food you may kill plants or animals The rule is to avoid wanton destruction of plants or animals While even animals kill only for the sake of food, it is deplorable that man, gifted with intelligence, kills out of hate or ambition for power and wealth. Indeed, such human beings are worse than beasts

It is good to avoid meat in the case of those who are striving for spiritual development That is why it is said that only such food as would help devotion to God should be taken For them vegetarian diet is the best. Whether you take vegetable or meat diet, killing of life is involved

DIVINE LOVE IS A PANACEA

Q : Often we are provoking others to attack us

Ramdas: That shows our heart is not pure Our impure heart provokes others to attack us Here defence is useless because we are responsible for the attack Ramdas will tell you an instance On several occasions people came to attack Ramdas and he only smiled at them They came very near him, but when they saw his smile they went away. You need not have any lethal weapon for defence The greatest weapon is love, which converts an enemy into a friend

We have heard many saints of the past used this weapon of love and triumphed over enemies Lord Buddha has said categorically, 'Give love for hate'. Jesus has said, 'Love thy enemies'. What is the principle underlying these sayings? We ought to purify our heart and

fill it with love Love can triumph over everything The worst passions can be quelled by the dawning of love in our heart This love is not the ordinary human love. Its nature is divine It is a gift of God When we get it we are saved and we can save others

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE WORLD TEACHERS

Q When you have your own religion, could you appreciate the good in every other religion without hurting your own?

Ramdas How could we hurt our religion when we see the same good in other religions as we see in ours? Now Ramdas quoted two sayings of the great Teachers of the world, Buddha and Jesus Buddha says, 'Give love for hate', and Jesus says, 'Love thy enemies' Can we not appreciate both Buddha's and Christ's teachings which are the same, and also of other Teachers of the world? We must be able to accept them all

Q It is only a different way to appreciate God

Ramdas It is the same God who speaks through all the great Teachers The Truth is the same God speaks through Jesus and Buddha, though the words may be different Buddha spoke in Pali, but Jesus in Hebrew.

Q: In the Catholic religion there is a dogma that salvation can come only through that religion What does Ramdas think about it?

Ramdas That is what every other religion also claims The Mohammedans say that there is no salvation except through Mohammed In Hinduism, Lord Krishna has said, 'Abandoning all paths come to Me alone for shelter I will liberate you from all sins' Jesus says, 'I am the way If you accept Me and take Me as your Saviour, you will attain salvation' This means through all these Teachers one God speaks The 'I' of all of them is the one great God

TRUE RELIGION EVOKES LOVE IN US

Q: So do you mean to say any religion that preaches love must be accepted?

Ramdas : If it does really evoke genuine love in your heart, it is a true religion and you should accept it.

NO CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Q: I should like to know what should be done between the East and the West Science seems to be a hindrance

Ramdas. Science is also trying to discover unity in nature The scientists have found that matter is energy When you see everything as the expression of energy, then you see unity in diversity When you dive deep down into the realm of the Spirit you see there is absolute oneness The supreme Spirit that pervades everywhere is beyond the range of the senses Anyhow science has progressed so far as to believe in the existence of energy which is the same as the matter we see before us. Science therefore does not come into conflict with religion, because it has advanced so much and it is on the road to further discovery Of course, the scientists do not believe beyond what they have discovered by means of sense perception and experiment. As the intellect cannot grasp the higher truths, the scientists do not want to pass any opinion about it, but ultimately they will also come to have faith in the existence of the Spirit East and West are one

GOD IS THE ONE PARENT AND WE ALL HIS CHILDREN

It may be necessary for some aspirants in the early stages to stick to a particular creed or church, but in due course they must outgrow them A fence is necessary for a small plant, but not for a grown-up tree The plant outgrows the fence So also we must outgrow the small fence of our own creed and make our vision universal, and behold the Divine everywhere manifest We must cultivate a spirit of universal brotherhood, looking upon the whole humanity as one family and God as our common parent Differences based on caste, creed and sect are unnatural By these we are creating barriers among ourselves We must break them so that we may unite

as children of the One Parent and live in mutual peace and goodwill.

GREAT POETS AND SINGERS POSSESS THE VISION OF GOD

Q Can the poet have the ultimate vision and do you believe that the ultimate vision is of the Spirit?

Ramdas Universal vision is the right vision Great poets and great singers catch glimpses of the Eternal Otherwise what they say cannot be so inspiring From their contact we can make out that they have that vision Their love goes to all alike irrespective of race, religion and nationality When the lamp is giving light it makes no distinction between one set and another set of people So also their vision being universal, whoever goes to them is received with love and affection The hunger of humanity is for love

REFUSE TO WAGE WAR

Q What should be our attitude if we are forced to join the war?

Ramdas Refuse to wage war, and face the consequences It would be better to be killed than to kill our brethren

FIGHT A RIGHTEOUS WAR IN SELF-DEFENCE

Q If Hitler sends enemies to my country, do you mean to say I should not do anything?

Ramdas We are talking about the question of your being forced to wage aggressive war upon people for power and possession In such a case you must not join But you will have to fight for your country's independence, when it is at stake There, it is a righteous war and not an engagement for wanton killing You should first attempt to transform the enemy into a friend with the power of love When the enemy falls upon you unjustly to conquer you, war is permitted in self-defence Individually a saint would rather allow himself to be killed than kill the enemy Where such power is not available for the preservation of the family and country, fight is permissible You know soldiers fight only because they

are commanded by their leaders In the last war you have heard of cases where soldiers of opposite camps shook hands with each other as brothers and friends. The Hindu scripture. Bhagavad Gita, was preached on the battlefield To protect the weak and helpless it is necessary that we should fight

RELEASE YOUR SPIRITUAL POWER

Nowadays war is not the same as of old — not a fight between two armies Bombs thrown from the aeroplanes cause destruction of innocent and harmless people on a huge scale How to combat this great menace? It is possible only through the exercise of soul force You may not believe in soul force, but this force is really irresistible Ramdas feels sure there will not be any war, although the great leaders of different nations are envisaging war and are preparing for it What we should do is to individually develop soul force for quelling the war waves that seek to overwhelm us, and produce security, peace and harmony.

Ramdas has been going from place to place with the sole object of awakening this force in you all There is a great reservoir of spiritual force within you You must become conscious of it through communion with God, and make use of it for the good of all beings and creatures on this earth This blessed human life is given to us in order that we may use this inherent divine force. The war problem will then be conclusively solved In fact this is the only answer to the problem You must therefore have the awareness of the divine Spirit and adjust your life and conduct according to the light you get from within The more you draw your vision inward from the outside clashes and conflicts of life, the better instrument you become for bringing real peace into the world The human body is like a temple Keep it pure so that God may work in it and His light may shine through it.

ONE TRUTH TAKES VARIOUS FORMS

Q We see two horses Though they are separate and have individuality, they are after all horses. Do you

think that there is also for humanity an essence behind the individualistic sense or at the end of time will everything be one?

Ramdas. Ramdas tries to understand the question There is the same power in each and everyone of us seeking to reveal itself by assuming different forms and colours. Is that what you mean? Just as electric energy passes through hundreds of bulbs of different colours and the current is the same that lights each bulb of a different colour, so there is one Life principle that activates and illumines all beings and creatures in the world For example, you take a lump of gold, from which you make various kinds of ornaments such as necklaces, chains, rings, bangles, etc Though different in name and form they are all made from one metal, gold So also one divine essence that pervades everywhere has taken all these diverse forms and names The Life principle, the essence of all things, is one.

Q What causes individuality? What is it that gives the different shapes?

Ramdas. We must see the difference and also the undifferentiated Truth at the basis of this diversity

YOU ARE A TEMPLE OF GOD

Q. Do you believe in individual life after death?

Ramdas In what state we die is a thing to be considered Individuality remains so long as the soul has not attained union with God If at the time of death a person meditates on God and loses himself in Him, then his individuality, which sees itself as separate from God, dissolves Otherwise, according to the Hindu belief, he will be reborn It will be better to realise Him here and now, for He dwells within you 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you'

Do not be afraid of death Live your life in utter surrender to the Divine will, feeling His presence at all times You must consider this body as a temple in which God resides. Purify it so that God's holy light may shine in and through it Then you will think well of

everyone, love all, and be ever kind, merciful and forgiving You should cultivate these virtues and become pure and guileless like children

Jesus has said, 'Unless you become like children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven' You must be free from all passions and desires You might see two children quarrelling for some time A few moments afterwards they are friends again Their hearts are free from malice and hate In a pure heart alone God will reveal Himself. 'Blessed are the pure in heart because they shall see God' So be like children Do not be childish but childlike

SORROW LEADS US FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL

Q I would like to know how one should take it when a great sorrow befalls Is there a way out?

Ramdas Generally sorrow comes to us as a result of the loss of an object which we hold dear, but which by its very nature is perishable This sorrow is due to our attachment As the object perishes or passes away, we are grief stricken Therefore instead of loving the perishable, we shall do well to love the imperishable The bitterness of this sorrow teaches us to turn our mind to the Real, the imperishable The imperishable is God

A STORY

Ramdas will tell you a story. Lord Buddha, the great Teacher, was going from place to place preaching Dharma — the path of liberation — to the people He happened to go to a village where he found that a woman had lost her only son and was sunk in deep grief She was going round the village asking everyone to do something to bring back her son's life All of them said that as her son was dead there was no chance of recalling him to life any more But she would not believe it A man advised her that she had better go to Buddha who happened to be in that village

The woman went to Buddha and told him that her only son had passed away and that she was very much grieved over the separation, and requested him to restore her son

kindly to life. Buddha replied that he would revive her son, provided she could bring for him a handful of sesame seeds from a house in which no death had occurred She agreed and went about from house to house asking for a handful of sesame seeds When the people were about to give her what she wanted, she told them the condition that nobody should have died in that house They all said death had occurred in their houses and the dead were more than the living, with the result that nowhere she could get the sesame as required by Buddha Now the truth dawned upon her that death was common in the world and that those who were born had to die one day or the other She found consolation and giving up her grief came to Buddha and begged him to teach her Dharma — the way to Nirvana

CHRIST IS ONE OF THE AVATARS

Q · What do you think of the theory of Avatars? Do you believe that Christ was an Avatar?

Ramdas. Ramdas does believe in Avatars and takes Jesus as one of the Avatars

SERVE WITH LOVE AND SYMPATHY

Q Is it not evil for a doctor to charge money for the treatment?

Ramdas. If he has money enough to get on, it is proper for him not to charge for the treatment He may take as much as is necessary for his livelihood and not charge heavily Whatever excess he gets from the patients may be used for the service of the poor He should not demand anything from the poor In this way he can bring relief and health to the sufferers In trade the merchants should never make exhorbitant profits and exploit the customers In all professions the evil of exploitation exists All have to be honest, sympathetic and just

WHO IS A MYSTIC?

Q. Is it possible to live like a mystic even in the family?

Ramdas It is possible The mystic can maintain his family and also be helpful to his neighbours When people do not live this kind of life, they are said to be living an abnormal life Abnormal life is that in which they live and work for only their selfish ends. They must be self-sacrificing and be kind and helpful to others in their distress This is the way of the mystics. They have a universal vision They love all alike. This is the ideal life

NEED OF REVOLUTION IN THE HEART

Q Is amelioration of human condition possible without a bloody revolution and without cancelling the human liberty and freedom?

Ramdas True, human liberty is being abused It is being used for exploiting people by taking by foul means what belongs to them Such liberty is harmful to society and should be condemned Any social reform should be effected only by a non-violent and not a bloody revolution First we should reform ourselves and form a society in which we can live together with mutual goodwill and service This revolution should essentially take place within us and extend its influence without When our heart is reformed, we will be able to create an atmosphere favourable for others to live in If not, we become the cause of confusion and disharmony in the world There is no use trying to make people believe or understand, by mere teaching, the greatness of unity and self-sacrifice Internal change alone is the way.

BELIEVE THE WORDS OF SAINTS

Q We cannot know God through our intelligence, but through love Is it possible to make any difference between love and intelligence? How can we really love something that we do not know?

Ramdas. God cannot be known to us by intellect, because He is beyond its grasp. We can love Him with our heart believing in His existence from the words of the great saints and sages who have seen and realised

Him. A man leaves his child when it is only a few months old, goes to a far off place and remains there for years together. The child grows up and does not know who its father is But the mother tells the child that its father is in such and such a place and teaches it to love him The child learns to love the father although it has only heard about him from its mother. The love gradually matures and at last the child sees the father

So, love of God is possible even before we have seen Him Saints who have seen Him tell us there is a God and He is all love and mercy, and if we rely on Him we will be happy and peaceful We must put faith in the words of the saints who speak to us from their own experience So God can be reached only by faith—faith in the words of saints Through intellect we cannot know Him. We realise Him only when intellect ceases to function and becomes perfectly still.

INTELLECT CANNOT KNOW ITS SOURCE

Then the question naturally arises why God should give us intellect Intellect helps us to know that we do not know anything. That is the best use of the intellect. When we know that we cannot know God, we must open our hearts and let our love flow towards Him Our love gradually becomes so intense that God does appear before us and He makes us feel His presence always We will have Him only when we give Him our entire love So, faith alone can guide us to Him and not reason Though intellect can grasp all external things, it cannot know its own source When you have a pair of tongs in your hand, you can pick up anything But the tongs cannot catch the hands with which they are held Similarly, the intellect is worked by a higher power and it cannot turn back and know that power.

A DIVINE HALO SURROUNDS A SAINT

Q Can the aura of a saint be photographed?

Ramdas: Some people have photographed it When the heart is pure, God's light within shines out.

Q. I wonder how it can be photographed? Photography is after all a mechanical thing

Ramdas. Yes, it can be photographed in some cases because the light is clearly seen.

Q Some people who magnetise have a large aura

Ramdas Those, who have their inner light lit, exert a magnetic influence on others It is said that a liberated soul, who is free entirely from the clutches of desires and dwells always in the divine consciousness, possesses five main qualities: 1. When spiritually illumined, he feels he has taken a new birth His identity with the body gives place to identity with the Eternal Spirit He is free from all sense of fear, and death has no terrors for him. 2 He is transparently guileless He is perfectly innocent and pure like a child, and therefore above the sense of sin and virtue He lives, moves and has his being in God 3 He is in a state of supreme ecstasy: day and night he swims in an ocean of bliss 4 He is really one who has surrendered himself completely to God and has become a very mould in whom God has poured Himself He is divinised within and without. 5 He has a halo around him and divine lustre on his face His heart is flooded with love for all He is ever smiling, peaceful, joyful and childlike, and so everybody likes him and finds peace and joy in his presence The last is the only external sign by which one can know that he is a great soul. The other qualities are known only to himself When thousands of people are drawn towards him and he exercises a strange fascination upon all who meet him, we can be sure that the Divine is revealed in him

LIMITATIONS OF THE INTELLECT

Q What is the real prayer? Should we have words to pray or is it enough if we remain in communion with nature and be in a state of humility?

Ramdas Ramdas should like to know the meaning of being in communion with nature. If you take nature as God, then that communion will help you If you take

nature as different from God, it will not help you.

Q. I did see nature as the manifestation of God. I do not see God as something personal and I cannot use words to speak to Him I know nature comes from God. I have great difficulty to pray with words I prefer the way of knowing things, Jnana Yoga

Ramdas: Socrates, the great philosopher, defined that knowledge is to know that we do not know anything. With the poor intellect we try to know God, but we cannot. What we have to do is to sit in meditation and dissolve the mind in the superconscious Reality within us The use of the intellect is only to distinguish the real from the unreal Whatever you see is unreal because it is perishable, and the Truth which pervades the universe — the substratum — is alone real It is imperishable Our quest should be to realise that imperishable So we should turn away from the perishable and lose ourselves in the imperishable So long as the intellect is active we will still be groping in the dark. The individual sense must disappear That is possible only by the cessation of the intellectual dynamics and absorption into the divine consciousness which is called Samadhi Then we realise what we truly are There are no two entities in Jnana Yoga. Knowledge, knower and the known, all become one The intellect can know very little Even in the manifest life there is so much mystery into which the intellect cannot probe and discover Then how can it gauge and know about the Infinity — the nameless, formless Reality?

Therefore, in the Upanishads, the path of negation — नेति, नेति — not this, not this — is prescribed Mind thinks of so many things which are not He He is beyond your physical, mental, sensual and intellectual consciousness So all these things must be transcended before you attain the consciousness of the Divine When you experience the Divine you say, 'I am He, I am He'. It is not the intellect that says this, nor the mind God makes you speak

ILLUSTRATION OF THE ROSARY

Jnana is realisation of Atman or Brahman through

discrimination, which is the function of the intellect. By a process of negation you arrive at the Reality. If you should see God in nature, you have first to see Him within. When the ego-sense is there, you see only differences and diversities. When you attain God-vision, then you see Him everywhere That means you see your own Self projected as the universe. This is the most exalted vision. To attain it the mind must be totally free from lust, greed, wrath, jealousy and pride. God shines only in the pure heart Saints have experienced this beatific state and they say that is the goal of human life. That is a vision of perfect oneness In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna has said, 'I am residing in the hearts of all beings like a string in a rosary of beads' Here the rosary is made of the thread and beads The thread may be of a material different from the beads. Say, it may be of silk, cotton or silver, and the beads may be of glass or gold A great Maharashtrian saint has improved upon this by describing that God and the universe are like the gold string on which gold beads are strung. The string is gold and the beads are also gold So the indwelling all-pervading Spirit is divine and the manifestation comprising all beings and things is also divine. God is all, and all in all This is the comprehensive vision of God This vision grants you eternal joy.

PRAYER HELPS WHERE INTELLECT FAILS

Q· Is it only by praying that one can reach that state — by saying the same prayer again and again?

Ramdas: Prayer helps us to concentrate our mind on God In our helpless condition when we are beset with worries, we find it very difficult to fix our mind on God. Prayer unites us with Him Our heart becomes pure and we realise His presence Intellectual efforts to see Him meet with nothing but failure When you commune with God through prayer, your intellect ceases to be active. In the stillness of the intellect the light of God shines in you. The mind is as restless as a monkey How to stop its antics? The name of God is the rope

with which you can tie the monkey. Ramdas' experience is that chanting of God's name is an easy way of controlling the mind. Intellectually we accept that God is within us and know that we are He. But we have to experience that state. We want intuitional experience, i.e., direct perception of the Divine within us and our union or oneness with Him. This is very important.

INTUITIONAL EXPERIENCE IS WHAT WE WANT

Q: In the mystic intuition is there not also a part of intelligence? If this intelligence is considered as a very poor tool, is it not different from synthetic intelligence?

Ramdas: Intuition is the outcome of enlightened intellect and purified heart. Intuition is the Divine speaking and acting through us. Here the ego-sense is absent. We are conscious that we are one with the Divine and that our body is only an instrument through which the Divine works for fulfilling His work in the world. The person who has gained this highest experience does nothing by or for himself, and he rightly says that he talks because God makes him talk, he works because God makes him work.

Your life is now utterly dedicated to the Divine. You are one with Him and still you are different from Him. This is indeed strange. This is an experience which cannot be put into words. However, the mystics have struggled to express it and when you hear them you wonder what they are talking about.

God is absolute existence, knowledge and bliss. If He is an object of knowledge, He cannot be real and He cannot be eternal. Because He is self-existent and self-luminous, He is not an object of knowledge. Every object of knowledge is perishable. The mystics say much about Him, but whatever they say cannot be totally He. Therefore, in the Upanishads it is said that He is not what you think of, He is not what you talk about.

GOD IS THE GIVER AND GOD IS THE RECEIVER

Q: Is detachment from earthly things absolutely necessary to progress on the spiritual path?

Ramdas: There is a saying that we may possess things but may not be possessed by them.

Q If renunciation is recommended for the spiritual progress of humanity, will that not in a way affect the material production necessary for humanity?

Ramdas: Spiritual progress is not satisfactory because of your attachment to things Ramdas does not say that you should not be engaged in production. You must produce as much as you can for the good of all people in the world. It is attachment that makes you hoard more than you actually need This attachment on the part of individuals brings unequal distribution in the world, with the result that some people are rich and live in comfort and plenty, whereas others are poor and starving and do not get employment even for earning the necessaries of life. This inequality is definitely due to cupidity and attachment Attachment is the cause of so much misery and confusion in the world Production of food and wealth must go on, so that all may be fed and clothed. God gives you plenty so that you may share it with the needy and distressed It is by His power that you earn; and when you give, you give only to Him — in the poor and the suffering. This is the ideal we must cherish and put into practice. It is not by remaining idle in the name of devotion to God that we can reach this great ideal Let us not forget that we are all children of the one Divine Parent We are all brothers and sisters You may think Ramdas is preaching communism It is not communism, but it is *divinism*, if Ramdas can coin such an expression

MYSTICS ARE SAME THE WORLD OVER

Q Are there differences between the mystics of Europe and India?

Ramdas. When Ramdas was in Geneva and France he had occasion to visit two monasteries and had talks with the abbots there They asked Ramdas to tell them his mystic experiences, and he told them in detail how he felt while walking in the path to God After the

talk was over, they said Ramdas' experiences tallied exactly with the experiences of the saints of the Christian faith. There was absolutely no difference So experiences of the mystics all over the world are the same. They also quoted some of their teachings which went to prove that the experiences of Indian mystics and European mystics are one and the same.

REVEAL THE BEAUTY OF THE SPIRIT IN ART AND SONG

Q. Are there relations between art and mystic experiences?

Ramdas: Mystics have a sense of beauty. Those who have got the talent for music, sculpture, art, etc., when they become mystics, express their exalted and holy emotions through art, music or sculpture You will find great poets among mystics in India and other countries. They have revealed their spiritual genius through their particular talents The mystics are in tune with nature, and through nature with God. When they stand before the vastness of a landscape, the greenness of a forest, the scintillating expanse of the blue water of the ocean, the golden hue of the sunrise and sunset, they go into a trance and feel the hallowed presence of the Most High In ecstasy they pour out their hearts in celestial rhapsodies and songs They love solitudes where they converse with God For instance, the painter-saints have in their pictures brought out the ethereal beauty of their adored and chosen ideals

If you make use of the divine gifts of art and music for the sheer gain of money, name and fame, you are doing wrong So it entirely depends upon you, how you use your talents You must strive to reveal the inner beauty of the Spirit in your heart So saints sang in rapture the glories of God

EXTERNAL WORSHIP LEADS TO INNER REALISATION

Q In all art there is an expression of divinity that purposely tries to glorify God

Ramdas To see divinity everywhere is a very high stage of spiritual attainment. Before we reach that blessed

state we have to purify ourselves by adoring God in particular forms. We must behold Him in some great beings first and afterwards see Him in all beings and things. So we keep before us a beautiful image of an incarnation and look upon it as the manifestation of God In the earlier stages, an image of God is very helpful, but later on we have to transcend the worship of the image and feel the presence of the Divine within. This is the experience of the mystics. Mystics establish a relationship with God as that of a child towards the mother, or of a servant towards the master, and through such relationship they purify their minds by means of constant remembrance and realise the greatness and glory of God

EGO-SENSE IS SIN

Q: What are the great obstacles for everyone to reach spirituality? What is the greatest sin?

Ramdas: Ego-sense is the greatest obstacle. It is the greatest sin What we should do is to surrender to the Divine will 'Oh God. Thy will be done. By Thy will alone everything happens. I am nothing Thou art everything.' By this attitude the ego-sense will disappear and you will feel His presence within you.

When 'I' and He become one, then there is only one universal consciousness. We become like a dew drop that falls in the ocean. We thus see that ego-sense is the sin and obstacle. If we put ourselves in the hands of God, He will guide us on the right path.

Q: We understand that there are two kinds of sin. One is that which hurts others and the other is that stands in the way of our approaching God.

Ramdas: They are the same, and both are caused by the sense of separation from God. We hurt another because of this A humble man is lifted up by God. The proud man falls because he forgets God and thinks highly of himself. Continuous remembrance of God's power and greatness turns us meek and humble. In the night the glow-worm feels proud of its tiny light, but when the sun rises it is nowhere So what is man after all, a puny creature before the almighty power of God.

SELFLESS ACTION IS THE WAY OF LIFE

Q One's actions can have good and bad consequences. Are there actions that are completely evil, but bring good to others?

Ramdas. All depends upon the nature of action If it is selfless, it is the outcome of a pure heart and therefore conducive to the good of everybody. We should not act out of selfishness and thereby cause injury to others in order to profit ourselves There is no redeeming feature in such a life. It is utterly evil

STILL THE MIND AND REALISE GOD WITHIN

Q You said yesterday about the most important thing to start on the road to spirituality. We should like to hear something more on the practical side

Ramdas The first thing necessary is the aspirant's contact with a saintly person. By that contact his heart is awakened

Q: If it has already been awakened?

Ramdas: Then let him take the next step. Now the aspirant begins to feel that there is God within him and by communion with Him he seeks to get real peace. In the company of the saint, he tasted this peace which came to him when the mind and the senses were all at a standstill It revealed itself from God within. Since it was at first shortlived, he struggles to get established in it. The quest starts to find God, the absolute Peace, within What should be done? The saint instructs him to remember God constantly and think of His greatness, power and glory, and chant His holy name. It is a very simple thing. Truly, when the aspirant takes God's name, His attributes flash on his mind and he becomes aware of God's presence. God is all-pervading, eternal and infinite He is all power and wisdom

When the aspirant repeats the name of God, his mind gets attuned with the sound of it and it tastes very sweet to him because he is singing the name of his Beloved. The mind is like a serpent gliding here and there. If you sing to it the divine Name it becomes still. The mind

free from desires becomes calm and serene. In the serene mind God's light shines and the aspirant becomes conscious of Him within. He is now a mould, as it were, into which God pours Himself.

THE STEPS THAT LEAD TO GOD

The first thing necessary is the yearning for God. Next, society of saints Third, repetition of His glorious name Fourth, meditation on His attributes. Lastly you will know that God is within you There is a saying in the Bible, 'Be still and know that I am God' Your 'I' becomes one with God Then you say, as Jesus said, 'I and my Father are one.' Hanuman, the great devotee of Rama, was asked by Rama as to who he was. He replied, 'As body I am your servant, as an individual I am part of you, and as Atman I am yourself'. So let us offer ourselves completely to God, in body, mind and soul, so that He may be revealed in us and His power may permeate all parts of our being Ramdas has given you briefly the method of approach to God If you take this line of approach, ultimately you will be blessed with the vision of God everywhere and you will get immortal bliss and peace

HOW TO KNOW WHO IS YOUR INNER GUIDE

Q: When we try to meditate, sometimes the 'I' takes the place of the Divine and thinks that it is in union

Ramdas: It is true, very often the 'I' puts on the mask of God, pretends to be He and misguides us. We might be all the time beguiled into thinking that we are acting according to the Divine will whereas we are guided only by our ego Such a thing does happen Then we must find through introspection whether it is the ego that directs us or the Divine This can be done by examining the motives of our action, whether we are actuated by selfish aims. This is the only criterion But the man who has surrendered himself to God, does not doubt. He is ever in a state of peace and ecstasy.

A man is generous when he is happy. On the contrary, when he is miserable he has a small heart and will

not give When you are joyful, you are incapable of doing any harm to others and you are kind and good. You will now feel the Divine Presence. You will know whether the ego or the Divine is guiding you

THE LAST ADVICE

Q· I am sure many are benefited by your visit here. They must have got something from you as they all have been happy What is your last advice to us?

Ramdas Take God's name constantly, whatever name you hold dear It will make your mind pure. Always sing the Name to yourself

Q· Will you give us the Name?

Ramdas Ramdas has got one Mantra, which is 'OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM' You may repeat this Mantra always.

HOLLAND

Place The Spiritual Development Centre,
145, Haringkade, The Hague.
19th September, 1954

LOVE DISSOLVES ALL DISTINCTIONS

Ramdas: We are living in a peculiar world We see diversity but we must find unity We can find unity only when we probe into the diversity and reach the underlying Spirit Hate must go and it must be substituted by love Love can come only if we recognize our spiritual kinship with all. Jesus has said, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself How can you love your neighbour unless you know you and he are one in Spirit? Then only our love goes to all alike irrespective of caste, creed or nationality The spiritual kinship is born of our acceptance of God as father and mother We are fighting with each other because we are not aware of the same God who is our one supreme Mother and Master

Q: This sounds like Christianity.

Ramdas: Yes. Truth is the same expressed in all the religions Love is a solvent of our ignorance and love is an answer to all problems that face us.

A DISCOURSE

By Ramdas

Glory of Divine Love

Q. We are very grateful that you have taken the trouble of coming here We should like if you could say something about your ideals and the way in which you try to realise them in the world.

Ramdas: First of all Ramdas must introduce himself to you as a humble servant and a small child of God. God is his master and mother He has sent him to the Western countries in order to propagate the ideals of universal love and service. Unless we cherish this ideal we cannot love all alike, and there is no hope of peace

and goodwill in the world Universal love is born of universal vision, which in its turn comes to us when we resign ourselves to God who is eternal, changeless Truth, ever residing in our hearts 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you' In that kingdom surely God dwells The definition of God according to Christ is love. We must therefore be pure and meek; free from lust, greed and wrath. Only the pure in heart can see Him By prayer we should commune with Him constantly as existing within us, and live a life of perfect friendliness with everybody. When anybody does us harm, we must be able to forgive him Ramdas remembers here the words of Jesus, 'How can you expect God to forgive your trespasses when you do not forgive the trespasses of your brethren?'

There is another dictum by one of the great souls who came to teach mankind, and whose name is Buddha. He says, it is not that we have only to forgive those who hate us, but we have to give love for hate So the great Teachers say that we should love all our fellow-beings and move with them in a friendly spirit

When once we hand ourselves over to God and become His, His light and peace will be revealed in our heart and we will be transformed into His very image So, to see God we must be perfectly pure Ramdas is quoting from the Bible, because he is familiar with the teachings of Jesus, and the Bible gave him great inspiration during the period of his struggle to attian God

How to Attain Perfect Purity

What should we do to attain purity? Prayer, constant remembrance of God through the chanting of His name, and ultimate surrender to His will, are the ways of attaining perfect purity By prayer we keep up our contact with God, and we open a channel between us and Him so that His love, power, grace, light and peace may pour into us Supposing there is a dry pond near a lake and we want that pond to be filled with water; what we have to do is to open a channel and connect the pond with the lake and when this is done the lake floods it

with water so much so that the pond overflows and becomes one with the lake. So we should open a relationship with God as His child or servant and call Him our mother, or master and allow His glory to manifest in us

This is the one way we can connect ourselves with God and stay our mind always in His remembrance Then, in course of time, when our remembrance becomes intense we will lose ourselves in Him and will be completely transformed by His grace. Grace is very important. Without grace we cannot achieve anything His grace must awaken us before we can realise that His will alone prevails and it alone causes everything to happen So long as we are conscious of this, we can never commit a wrong or sin We are sanctified and made holy. We will see everywhere the Divine We will see our fellow-beings and all creatures as the expression of Divinity. Then we cannot but love everybody alike. In this vision we will be spontaneously spreading peace, goodwill and harmony everywhere Wherever we go we will be able to awaken, in the hearts of people, faith in God. This is not true of only a few here and there This is possible for all of us

Men Are Lower Than Animals!

The very fact that we are born as human beings entitles us to make this life blessed by realising God and spreading His light and joy all around. This is the mission with which human beings are born But what are we doing? We are living and fighting like animals over petty gains, ambitions and ideologies What a sorry spectacle we see in the world! We see fighting accompanied by merciless killing merely out of lust for power and wealth Animals kill for food They do not kill out of hate In this respect men are lower than animals We must have our hearts purged of selfishness and hatred We must open ourselves to receive His grace Each one of us should realise the Divine within us. If we do so we will bring heaven upon the earth There will be no strife, discord or war.

Man is given intellectual powers which he can use for creating harmony in the world Instead he employs them for inventing new machines, atomic bombs and neuclear weapons to destroy human life What a horrible state of affairs! If we do not reveal in our hearts the inherent love divine by which alone we can produce harmony and peace in the world, we will be heading towards another global catastrophe We should avoid this by every means possible As the thought so is the action. When we attune our minds with God, our actions will become pure and they will be for the good of others

A Story

Remembrance of God means elevation to a higher consciousness We must keep this light burning within us always You know, as soon as the light goes out, we fall into darkness When our vision is pure we see only good If impure, we see evil Ramdas will tell you in this connection a story from the Mahabharata There was a very good king named Yudhishtira who led a righteous life In his own time there was another king named Duryodhana who was evil-minded and lived an unrighteous life One day Lord Krishna, a great incarnation of God, asked Yudhishtira, the virtuous king, to pick out for him a bad man in the world The king went about in search of a bad man He returned and told Krishna that he could not find such a one Krishna called Duryadhana, the vicious king, and asked him to find out for him a good man Duryodhana went in search of one He could see only bad men everywhere and not a single good man He came and reported this to Lord Krishna This incident shows that if we are good everybody is good to us, but if we are bad everybody is bad to us So let us be good and have no enemy We will then love all and be loved by all Such a life is possible only through self-purification.

Sun and glow-worm

Self-purification can come only by constant thought of God. When we remember God, the almighty Power,

we feel how insignificant we are. Now our ego-sense disappears and our minds become pure Let us know that God's power alone is working in the world What can we do? We are absolutely nothing Have you seen a glow-worm which shines in darkness and thinks it is a great thing? When the sun shines you cannot find where the glow-worm is. So in the presence of God, the sun, we are like glow-worms We become humble and meek, and feel we are the servants and God is our all-powerful master Otherwise, we forget Him, the ego-sense comes up, and we think of evil and resort to bad actions for which we reap bitter fruits later When we remember God we walk always on the right path

Love is a Solvent

Therefore let us not forget Him Continuous consciousness of God is the same as living in His presence Such a life is perfectly holy and blessed. As it is, we are too much engrossed in worldly life We think we are only the physical body. We do not know that we are the immortal Soul We have forgotten what we really are It is not by externalising our mind that we can achieve anything real, but we must turn inwards by constant prayer to and remembrance of the Divine within, and surrender to Him, so as to dispel the darkness of nescience and awaken the light and peace eternal We will then be able to do all our actions in a spirit of love. Disharmony can go only by the power of love Love is a great solvent Suppose there is an object that does not dissolve in water or in some other liquid. We put in a solvent which enables the object to dissolve So, love is the solvent that causes the individual soul to dissolve in God, Why is it that we do not love our neighbour? It is because our narrow love has not changed into universal love We can make our little self expand into the universal Self God is not in the heaven above, but He is in our hearts We may call Him God, Truth or Reality To find Him we must dive deep within ourselves. He

is there ready to receive us. We have lost touch with Him. Truly if all of us discover Him within us, what a happy world can we create!

Ramdas' Mission

Ramdas has come all the way from India only to talk to you about God and create an atmosphere of peace and goodwill everywhere. Let us think and talk of God and awaken God-awareness in all people we meet, and may they become lamps lit with light divine. Let us not waste our lives for the fading enjoyment of low desires. Let us not fall an easy prey to temptation and forget God. We sit ostensibly for prayers but our mind wanders in ever so many directions. Let us fix our thought on God and pray for strength, purity, love and peace. Repetition of the Name is the way to keep up a steady remembrance. When you take the name of your friend or relation who is living far away, at once his figure comes into your mind. So also if you, at all times, take the name of God, you will have God-consciousness continuously with you. You should believe that you are taking the name of God, who dwells in you and who is your eternal Mother and Master. God is personal and also impersonal. So take Him in His personal aspect as your companion, master or mother. Some look upon Him only as impersonal. But He is both personal and impersonal. He is the all-pervading Spirit — the eternal essence of all that exists — but He is also a Supreme Person who pours His grace on us. He is at once with form and without form. He has manifested Himself as the universe. He also manifests Himself as incarnations who lead men on the path of righteousness and perfection, and to ultimate union with Him.

GOD IS AT ONCE PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

Q. Is not the Nirguna or the impersonal Brahman the highest ideal? Do we not realise the formless when we meditate on this formless Divine?

Ramdas. You speak of the Nirguna Brahman. God is all-pervading, changeless, nameless and formless Reality.

That is His impersonal aspect. When that impersonal Brahman is born as a great Teacher to save mankind, He becomes personal This is called Saguna Brahman So God is not merely a cosmic Truth, but He becomes also a Divine Personality He is the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Spirit He is the mighty power that rules the world, residing in the hearts of all beings and creatures When we are conscious of the Divine and realise that we are the eternal Reality, and that all our fellow-beings are expressions of the same Reality, we will love everybody

The personal Brahman — the incarnation or Avatar — helps us to realise the impersonal Brahman 'I and my Father are one' Who is the Father? He is the impersonal Brahman, and son is the personal Brahman. When Jesus was asked to show his Father, he said, 'He who sees the son sees the Father' This means the Father who is impersonal is manifest before them as the son He is the personal form of the impersonal Brahman or God God is at once impersonal, silent witness, and also the personal — a Divine Person manifest before you

WHY WE FORGET GOD

Q: Why do we forget God?

Ramdas It is ignorance that makes us forget Him Knowledge should dawn in us Knowledge comes from the great Teachers who exhort us not to forget God We have to follow their advice.

YOU GET NOTHING BY CHURNING WATER

Q Where has ignorance come from?

Ramdas That is a mystery Ramdas was asked this question wherever he went God's ways are inscrutable. The poor human intellect cannot know the why and wherefore of many things Our limited intellect cannot judge the ways of the Infinite But this much we know that ignorance has enveloped us and it can be removed by God's grace, and grace can come to us when we keenly aspire for Him We must pray intensely, 'Oh God, remove my

ignorance and make me Thine.' When a bird is caught in a cage it does not care to know how and why it was caught. Its aim is only to get out of the cage The same is the problem with us. If we ask how and why we are ignorant of God, we will spend in vain our whole life in trying to find this out The best course is to pray for God's grace His grace will enable us to realise Him and attain eternal freedom The great philosopher, Socrates, has said that knowledge is to know that you do not know anything. The intellect may understand the external objects, but it has no entry in the realm of the Spirit. It cannot know God who dwells within us When the intellect is perfectly still we get that superconscious experience Let our heart open to faith and love and let divine grace flow into us and transform us Then we will get the peace for which we are thirsting day and night Persistently asking the why and how of things will be like churning water By churning water you know you cannot get anything

GOD REVEALS IN THE HEART

Q So you say intellectual thinking is the cause of all troubles?

Ramdas: Yes, in the spiritual line Intellect can discriminate, but cannot take you to the divine goal At a certain stage you come to know that by your own effort nothing can be gained You try to understand God, but fail to do so. True knowledge comes only when the mind is perfectly still 'Be still and know that I am God' According to the Hindu way of approach, reason helps only to distinguish the Real from the unreal Reason tells you whatever you see here is perishable and does not last, and so you should not identify yourself with these things, but should turn your mind to the real and everlasting Thereafter the heart guides you Unfortunately the heart which is filled with impure emotions distracts you. That is why there is so much chaos and confusion in your minds If the heart is with God such things will not be there

Q: What is there behind the intellect?

Ramdas: God is behind the intellect

Q: Can we not use the intellect in a higher sense?

Ramdas: Only for discriminating the Real from the unreal There is a prayer in the Upanishads, 'Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, and from death to Immortality.'

BEHOLD THE DIVINE BEHIND THE FORMS

Q. As I look at the flower as the manifestation of God, I feel it is very real

Ramdas. Yes, it is real, in the sense that the Spirit in it is real. What is it that creates it and makes it grow? There is a certain power in it that makes it grow and have the beautiful form After some days the form fades away, whereas the power that brings it into being is imperishable. You see only the external forms and not the Spirit within them And we are unhappy when the forms disappear. If you are aware of the eternal Spirit that pervades everywhere. you will never feel the loss of anything You will then live in the spiritual realm Most people live only in the material realm Your sense of beauty is only for the external You like a fair man and not an ugly man There are godly men who see the Divine even in lepers and serve them with so much love. They never see ugliness in them and therefore do not shun them. If you behold the entire world-manifestation as Divine, you will have no likes or dislikes for any particular form. It is because of likes and dislikes, there is conflict and darkness in the mind

Q: Are we to love even the shark in the sea?

Ramdas: You see the Divine in it also It does not mean that you should fall into its mouth. You may not dislike it or hate it

Q: But you have to defend yourself against the evil forces as in the case of a serpent

Ramdas: Ramdas has in his own life allowed serpents to come near him His love for them was so great that they never did him any harm. They wound

round his leg. He neither feared them nor had the least enmity towards them. He saw God in them.

Q. But he may be bitten by a flea?

Ramdas If it wants to bite let it bite and have some blood. We do not have to hate it on that account.

INTELLECT IS WORKED BY DIVINE POWER

Q: These are intellectual questions and I believe we cannot use the intellect to solve the big mystery But you are telling us about loving everything and when you refer to the shark, flea and flower, the question comes — what is God

Ramdas. It is difficult to conceive what God is. How can the limited intellect gauge the infinite and unlimited Truth? It is baffling We dare to say then that there is no highest Truth at all But those who have gone beyond the range of the intellect, and had the spiritual realisation, declare with one voice that there is a Divine Power that controls the whole universe That is a matter of experience which cannot be expressed in words

The intellect works, acted upon by the Divine Power. and it cannot turn back and understand that Power It can understand only the external objects which are perishable and that too, imperfectly. Trying to understand the Truth with the help of intellect is like trying to measure the depth of the sea with the help of a salt doll.

THERE IS NOTHING LIKE LOVE

Love is of the heart and not of the intellect Love is the fulfilment of the spiritual quest If a single child loves you and you love it in return, the sense of oneness thus produced gives you great joy. If the same sense of unity is achieved by loving all people in the universe, your joy will be billionfold You will be simply revelling in infinite joy Therefore love has been defined as God Love is a wave that rises in the heart and inundates all the worlds Then you say, 'The entire cosmos is mine and all beings and creatures are my brothers and sisters' What a supreme privilege God has given us to look upon

the whole universe as our own! It is said by a saint in India that God dwells in that heart in which there is compassion, forgiveness and peace If you are devoted to God, you must develop these qualities We expect God to be all kindness and forgiveness to us We ought to cultivate these divine qualities first, and love and forgive our brethren who wrong us. Then Grace descends on us

There is a saying, 'When you have God as your friend, the whole world becomes friendly to you' This is a very characteristic sentence If God does not become your friend, you will meet enemies everywhere The serpent which came near Ramdas did not bite him because Ramdas never looked upon it as an enemy On many occasions people were about to attack him, but Ramdas simply smiled at them and they became friends. Verily, love kills hate, just as light destroys darkness. Ramdas speaks thus, as he has found from his own experience that the greatest thing is Love. The seat of love is the heart and not the intellect Intellect often creates doubt but not the heart The heart loves and forgives

WHEN MIND IS PURE ENEMY BECOMES FRIEND

Q: So the use of Yogic power to tame a serpent is of a lower level

Ramdas: Ramdas' reference is to Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti means love or devotion to God. Through devotion you can find union with Him When your life is imbued with love you can automatically disarm others of their evil intentions towards you

Once a man came to Ramdas in the course of his wanderings He said that his colleagues in the office treated him very badly and therefore he was unhappy. Ramdas asked him to take God's name continuously and assured him that everything would be all right He believed Ramdas' words and went on taking the Name with all faith and devotion After a few days he again came and said that his colleagues in the office had turned good and friendly to him and he was very happy. Then Ramdas told him that previously he had found them bad,

as his heart was impure and he had dislike for them. For dislike he got dislike in return Now, by the repetition of God's name, his heart was purified, and so he could love them The result was he got love in response. He projected his own mind on them and made them what he wanted them to be This is not an intellectual theory but a practical experience

Q In India do you have any special training for this goal?

Ramdas The aspirants are taught to remember God, first three or four times a day, then all the time Not only on Sundays but on all days By this practice alone the aspirant's heart becomes perfectly pure and he develops love and kindness for all beings and creatures In India people are charitable and self-sacrificing They readily share what they have with others Some even worship tigers They see God in them and do not harm them. There are saints who play with tigers and other wild animals This is all because they have love in their hearts By your love you can convert the most ferocious beast into a tame animal

LOVE, THE GREATEST TRANSFORMER

Q Can Asuras be controlled?

Ramdas Yes, it is possible There are cases of persons of wild and violent nature having become docile. In Bengal there lived a famous saint called Sri Krishna Chaitanya He sang God's name and went into ecstasies He wished everybody should take God's name and enjoy its sweetness He went with devotees from street to street singing God's name, so that all people may hear the Name and get purified There were two bandits in the town where this saint lived You might call them Asuras They were persecuting, in many ways, this saint and his followers, when going round the town singing God's name But the devotees did not mind it at all One day one of these bandits flung a sharp stone at the party and it hit Chaitanya's devotee, Nityananda, on his forehead, and blood gushed forth. Nityananda

came to know who threw the stone at him He went straight to the bandit and, giving him a warm embrace, said, 'Oh brother, I do not mind your hitting me But I have a prayer to you. Please utter God's name once' As soon as the bandits saw the love and forgiveness of this devotee, their heart melted and they fell at his feet This was a great transformation The bandits turned into great devotees of God and joined their party. Love is the sole antidote for all the ills of the world We must be devotees of love — God is love.

LOVE IS THE KEY-NOTE OF LIFE

Q: Do you think it is possible to realise this love in politics?

Ramdas. Love can enter every department of life and purify and ennoble it. It has a place in business, in politics, in industries, commerce and all other activities. When love is there, there will be no clash or conflict, selfishness, the cause of all ills, disappears Ramdas talked about this yesterday in Brussels He told that he was not preaching communism, but divinism. Our body must be laid at the altar of service. Our love must reveal itself in service, and that is the only way we can make our life holy and blessed

Q Here the difficulty for us is perhaps more to realise God outside than realise Him within ourselves

Ramdas. When we realise Him within, we find Him also without First of all we must see Him inside us We cannot love others as we love ourselves, unless we know the Self within them is the same as the Self within us.

WORSHIP GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF YOUR HEART

Q. Does church-going really help?

Ramdas: If by going to church you realise His divine presence, by all means go. Do not forget, you can feel His presence wherever you are, provided you attune your life with Him You are the receiver and He the transmitter. His voice should speak through you and He should

guide you from within In India there are many temples, but there are many people who do not go to them. There is a place of worship in the houses of Hindus. They daily resort to this room for some time and perform their spiritual practices It is necessary for every one to retire for some time from the worldly bustle, and sit calm and serene in prayer and meditation. When the mind is still you feel His presence. When the mind is restless God's light cannot shine in us For example, there is in front of you a big vessel of water and you put in it some object, say a diamond If the water is still you see the diamond clearly, but if the water is disturbed you cannot see it So also if the mind is disturbed you cannot see God Remembrance of God alone can still your mind Ramdas did not do anything for seeing Him except constant repetition of His name, and within a short time the mind became perfectly still Of course all this happened by God's grace

GIVE ALL YOUR LOVE TO GOD

We must make ourselves fit to receive Grace This means to keenly aspire for it, and sometimes you will have even to cry for it As Ramakrishna Paramahamsa once said, 'People cry for wealth, position and for their relatives, and they shed so much tears that if it is all collected it will fill a tank but there are very few who cry for God' Our cry for God must be like that of a man who is gasping for breath when he is forcibly kept under water.

If we love God more than everything else in the world, our mind will automatically go to Him This love alone is enough But people always ask the question how we can love God when we have not seen Him Their argument is that the child loves the mother because the child has seen the mother. The answer to this is that we are told by saints and sages that there is God and that they have seen Him We have to believe their words and learn to love Him Then we will also surely behold Him.

GOD WILLS FOR THE BEST

Q· As soon as God comes to us in human form we may love Him But God of destruction gives us earthquakes and so on.

Ramdas One who has faith in God says that everything happens for the best, even earthquakes Floods or earthquakes take place only by His will Even in our daily life, when anything untoward happens, we must accept it as being for our own good. We must say, 'Oh God, Thy will be done.' When calamities come and human lives on a large scale are destroyed, we feel for them. There are so many other creatures like worms and ants that die every minute in millions and millions, in this vast world. We ignore this because we feel only for human beings, as we are identified with the human life The act of creation and destruction goes on ceaselessly From the universal standpoint this apparently colossal destruction is insignificant It is all the work of one Cosmic Power which is responsible for creation, preservation and destruction All the objects are perishable, they appear and disappear, while the Spirit alone is eternal If we take everything as happening by the will of the eternal Spirit, we have no question at all Everything is as God wills We must submit to that will

In Ramdas' life you see, he was made to pass through many so-called trials and difficulties, but he took everything as willed by God for his good, and he was ever cheerful He never grumbled or fretted about them When God is all love, no evil can come from Him We ignorant people take certain things to be for our good and certain other things for evil, and therefore become happy or unhappy accordingly.

Q. Are we responsible for what is evil in the world?

Ramdas. If war is an evil, and if it takes place, we are contributing towards it, because we are afraid of war and our hearts are filled with dislike and hatred. This creates an atmosphere in which war becomes inevitable.

Q. So when war happens we cannot say it is God's will

Ramdas: It is God's will. He who has surrendered himself to God takes it that way.

VOX POPULI VOX DEI

Q: But you said our own dislike and hatred are responsible for the war.

Ramdas. Yes. You see one man talks through a microphone in the transmitting station, and his sound waves reach millions and millions of people, even though they may be far away If you send a good thought wave, it will be spread everywhere in ether Waves of such thought will have healing and harmonising influence in preventing wars. By making a united effort to bring about peace, and by uniting ourselves with the all-pervading beneficent God, we can prevent wars. But what are we now doing? We are stricken with fear and we are nervous. We send out thoughts of hate. By this we invite wars Let us be fearless, relying entirely upon the Divine who dwells in us *Vox Populi Vox Dei* — Voice of people is voice of God

Q You can understand that it is very difficult for us in the western world In America they say people have no time even to eat Where is the time to think of God?

Ramdas. In spite of having passed through the horrors of war, do they still feel there is no time to think of God? No, let us remember God and not give chance for another war You are all assembled here in the name of God In every one of you there is a keen aspiration for Him Ramdas has seen so many people, belonging to various spiritual associations, really hungering for peace for themselves and for all. The combined force released by the prayer of all those people will be powerful enough to stem the tide of war If the minds of you all are in communion with God, even for a short time, it will contribute to the attainment of peace for all in the world

Q Do you think that we have not only to act as individuals but as a community testifying to that love?

Ramdas: How is it that you have been attending your churches for many years and still wars have become inevitable in the western world? If you send waves of love in all directions, there will be peace and goodwill in the world.

SHARE YOUR SPIRITUAL WEALTH WITH OTHERS

Q: You put before us the thought that one can realise God within oneself. But is it necessary to do it in a community, not only personal but in community life?

Ramdas: You cannot but do it in a collective sense also. When you develop, others also develop by your contact. You form a group and mutually help in advancing on the path. When you have begun individually, you will help collective growth. You have to take every one along with you, especially those who are progressing on the same lines. This is inevitable.

Q: So do you mean to say personal salvation is impossible?

Ramdas: It is impossible. As you progress you wear yourself out in the service of others. In spirituality, mere personal salvation does not exist at all. You cannot but share your spiritual gifts with others. By sharing, your store is increased.

INTUITION NEVER FAILS

Q: It looks very simple, but you have given us a very strong force. We must think it over. Can you tell us something about intuition?

Ramdas: When your mind is perfectly still and the Divine guides you from within, your actions are unerring. You will never make a mistake. If you make reason your guide, you will make mistakes because reason cannot always be right. Of course it is better to be guided by reason than by the impulsive mind. Mind is enveloped by ignorance and cannot direct you on the right path. Intuition never fails. It stands the test of pure reason and pure emotion. It is quite possible when you have done an action, your heart says, 'You have done right', and the

intellect says, 'You have done wrong'. But if you are guided by intuition there is no such conflict. Intuition is the outcome of the harmony of a purified intellect and heart. It is the divine voice speaking through you. Jesus declared, 'I am doing my Father's business' He did not mind the consequences, and even when he was crucified, he had no regrets for what he did When Socrates was about to be poisoned, he was advised to stop preaching about Truth so as to save himself But he refused to stop preaching. He did not care whether the body perished or lived It is the Divine who makes use of the body as His vehicle He keeps it or breaks it as He wills

The Hague,
20th September, 1954.

GOD — THE INSPIRATION OF YOUR LIFE

Ramdas: Will you kindly let Ramdas know what he is to speak about today?

Q Perhaps it will be nice for us to hear something about your Ashram and its various activities, or you may have something else for us

Ramdas: Ramdas, as the very name signifies, is a servant of God, and at His command this servant has come to the West, and having gone over several countries of Europe has at last come here to meet you and talk to you about God. He has no other subject to talk about and his message is 'Universal Love and Service.' You must feel that you are all children of one God and love one another, serve one another and produce an atmosphere of harmony and peace in the world. This is the mission of every one of us, and to the extent we fulfil this mission lies the hope of world's redemption from the clutches of strife, war and consequent misery.

Our friend wants Ramdas to speak something about our Ashram Before doing so he must tell you that God is not merely an omnipresent, static and changeless Spirit, but He is also the Master of action, which means, by His power and will the whole universe is moving and is dynamic What you have to do is that you must make the immutable consciousness the background of your life and action in the world. You have not to renounce action, but divinise it.

We are living in a selfish spirit and so we are unhappy and make others unhappy If we surrender ourselves to God and be conscious that His power is at work in and through us, we will fulfil His plan which is to bring harmony and goodwill in the world So, activity is not contrary to the realisation of God We must, as a great saint has said, with one hand hold on to God and with the other work in the world When the work is over

we must hold on to God with both hands So we must not lose contact with God even when we are active in the world Our mind with Him and hands at work Instance is given, in the Hindu scriptures, of women in the villages who go to a common well to fetch water for their homes. Their dwelling places are pretty far from the well They take with each of them four or five pots of different sizes and, after filling the pots with water, they poise them on their head one over the other, so that in one trip they can fetch a good quantity of water home These pots on their head are balanced so nicely that it is wonderful to see how they remain in position even without being supported by hand Walking back home, these women talk, laugh and gesticulate Still the pots remain firm on their heads This means, though the women talk and laugh, their attention is on the pots. Otherwise the pots will fall down. This example is given to prove that you can keep your mind in God and still be active in the world. You can maintain a continuous awareness of God, and outwardly be active. If you live in this way, your life will flow blissfully for the benefit of all.

We forget God and suffer so much because of ego-sense. We are subject to petty jealousies and we make our life bitter If we wish to sweeten our life, we must remember God and allow His power to act through us We will then do everything for the good of others. We will be in tune with the Divine through remembrance, even as the attention of those women is upon their pots while talking, laughing and gesturing

ASHRAM SERVICES

Our Ashram activities are carried out on the same lines. God has made us His instruments Many come to the Ashram hungry and in rags, and the Mother, who is with us here and who is managing the whole Ashram, gives them food and clothing We are engaged in various works in the Ashram, performed in a spirit of service to humanity. We have a Free Hospital consisting of a dispensary, and also in-patients' and maternity wards A

doctor, a compounder, a dresser, a nurse and another helper form the staff of the hospital From the neighbouring villages poor people come for medical relief. Over a hundred patients are attended daily and they receive help from the dispensary. In cases of persons who are unable to go back home due to severe illness, we keep them in the ward and tend them. If patients are too ill to come to hospital, our doctor visits them at their homes There are many poor women who have not got anything to fall back upon especially in cases of confinement. We admit them in the maternity ward.

We have an elementary school We found poor children going without any education. So we started a small elementary school where we give them education so that they may learn to read and write, forming a suitable background for a better life. We give them also religious instruction so that they may pray and be inspired to live a good life. Recently we handed over this institution to the Government, having managed it ourselves for about ten years Over one hundred children were attending the school. They were given free education, meals and dress. We have also an industrial school where children who have passed the elementary school are admitted We teach them hand-loom weaving, hand-printing on cloth and dyeing of cotton yarn and fabrics There is a tailoring section also After a training for two years the students are issued certificates

We have farms in which we cultivate paddy Mother herself supervises the work in the fields Also, under her instructions, the school work, the industrial school work and hospital work are carried on In a silent and mysterious way she is managing all these institutions, though she rarely goes to any of them

The main Ashram consists of a prayer hall where all the members gather for prayers for about an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening After that each one goes back to the service allotted to him or her. Some are working in the office, some in the kitchen, some in the school, some in the industrial school and some in other

departments. We are conducting a magazine called *The Vision* dedicated to Universal Love and Service, which publishes articles relating to spiritual matters by Ramdas and the teachings of saints and sages, both modern and ancient.

TO LOVE MAN IS TO LOVE GOD

You are all very kind to Ramdas, because, you all are forms of his Beloved This is like the talk of a child to its mother in the language taught by her.

We should not renounce work but divinise it We must do everything in all humility, in full submission to the will of the Divine. Who is a true devotee of God? He who serves mankind. We have been taught that in every one of us dwells God, and when we serve all we really serve Him It is rightly said that if one says he loves God and does not love his brother, he is a liar. If we hate anybody we are not lovers of God God is pleased when we love one another Ramdas often quotes Jesus. This is the main teaching of all the religions of the world Love is the principal thing to be practised in our life. If love is not in the heart it will be dry and arid, and there is no hope of gaining God's grace By His grace alone we can feel His presence every moment of our life.

People try to wash away their sins by so many acts of penance and discipline, but by constant remembrance of and resignation to God alone we can purify our hearts. So long as we are in touch with God through remembrance, there is no chance of our going astray. To remember Him is to walk in light, and to forget Him is to grope in darkness This light is within us We get it only when our heart is pure. So in the Ashram we are trying to live an ideal life so that all may learn how to combine activity with meditation Communion with God is meditation. Action is service of God

ALL TEACHERS PREACH THE SAME TRUTH

Ego-sense is the obstacle in the way of our realising

God. When we think of Him we become humble. He who is humble can float on the waters. He who is proud sinks There is a saying in Hindi, 'While pride drowns you, humility keeps you afloat' Through pride, so many evils beset our life. It is pride that creates the feeling of separation among us.

Ramdas has come to you to propagate universal love Universal love can be practised only by our being one with the Universal Spirit. This is what the great Teachers of the world teach us They clothe their thoughts in a terse way, their words are pregnant with meaning We can understand them only when we read them with a heart full of faith and an intellect disciplined and sharp. Dull intellect cannot grasp anything Sometimes we learn scriptures by heart, parrot-like!

Jesus says, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' This is possible only when you realise your oneness with Him in Spirit The three great Teachers, Christ, Krishna and Buddha, were Ramdas' spiritual guides, when he was walking on the path of God with the aim of experiencing God's presence and living in God One taught how to love The second taught how to act without being attached and thereby selflessly serve humanity. The third taught how to attain the blessed state of Nirvana and have compassion for all living beings When you have the universal vision you cannot but love everybody alike In this connection Ramdas will tell you an instance

BEHOLD YOUR SELF IN ALL BEINGS

Once a man wanted to have some fun He got his room fitted with mirrors everywhere — on all the walls, floor and ceiling Every inch of space held a mirror. When this work was over, he stood in the room, switched on the electric light, and saw his own innumerable reflections in front, back, below, above and on all sides — himself in thousands of forms It was a blissful sight for him. After enjoying the scene for some time he came out, but forgot to close the door His dog entered the room. Strangely enough, it found thousands of dogs on every side.

It did not know that they were its own reflections It started barking and jumping at them When it saw that the dogs in the mirrors also barked and jumped, it became very furious It barked and fought for a long time till it got exhausted and fell down dead

Let us not be foolish like the dog When we see ourselves in another, we cannot but love him When poor people come to the Ashram with children all dirty and in rags, our Mother will give the children a clean bath, new clothes and nourishing food Once a visitor to the Ashram, who did not see eye to eye with the Mother's actions, asked her why she was touching and washing the dirty children of low castes Mother's reply was that she did not care whether the children belonged to a higher or lower caste She only knew that her body and their bodies were not different, and as she washed her own body whenever it was dirty, so she also washed the bodies of the children and clothed them So there was nothing to be wondered at She does not expect any praise for it as she does not when she washes her own body

TEN EVILS

Lord Buddha teaches that we have to avoid ten evils. They are of the mind — scepticism, envy and wrath, of the tongue — gossiping, lying, abusing and slandering; of the body — stealing, killing and adultery When we are free from these ten evils we become pure in thought, word and deed This is indeed God's grace Now He manifests Himself in our heart and transforms us into His own image. You must have heard about the Ramayana This is an epic in which it is stated God appears as Rama He kills a demon, Ravana, having ten heads God and His name are not different In India the name of Rama is popular. It is on the lips of thousands and thousands of people. When they repeat Ramnam with faith, God reveals Himself in their hearts So if you repeat the Name constantly, the ten-headed demon within you — the ten evils — will be destroyed God's name is so powerful that if you constantly chant it, it will eradicate all the impurities of

the mind. Your thoughts, your words and your actions will then be always pure. So your life will be inwardly and outwardly holy and blessed

ONE GOD, ONE HUMANITY AND ONE WORLD

If we lead a pure life, we will be gradually awakened to the Divine in us and the love-spring of our heart will flow out in abundant measure This flow of love should be spread It is a mistake to demarcate East and West In fact, we all belong to one world. Earth is one, humanity is one and God is one, because all have come forth from one God If we only know this, where is room for strife and dissension? The most deplorable fact is that we are fighting each other in the name of religion or God Our fight is for the sake of power and authority Let us remember the one God, who is love, seated in our hearts, and establish peace and goodwill on the earth Love should not allow these fights to go on

WHAT IS RELIGION?

What is the meaning of religion? Ramdas does not know much of Latin He was taught when he was a student that *Re* means back, and *Ligare* means bind So religion means to bind back We have separated ourselves from God and we have to bind ourselves back to Him This is what is meant by religion. Let us therefore unite ourselves in the name of God, serve one another and live in harmony and peace In a house, when there is unity among all members, there is happiness When they are divided and quarrelling, there is misery God is the unifying force Let us seek and find Him

Ramdas is talking like a child. He just pours out his heart. Man depends upon wealth and glory — the so-called good things —for his joy. These are illusive. The joy you derive from them is like a flicker. Next second the light is gone and you are enveloped by darkness But the joy Ramdas has is pure and holy — not a tinge of grief in it — for it is dependent on itself. When you depend upon something else for your joy, and that

something diasppears, your joy also disappears. If you depend upon the Eternal for joy, it will be for ever. God exists by Himself He is His own source. If you commune with Him you will have immortal joy. Ramdas will tell you a story in this connection

A STORY

Once a man was passing on the road He saw a blind man sitting by the side of it Taking pity on him he asked him to come to his house for food The blind man agreed Now he who invited the blind man went back to his house and told his wife to have food prepared for an extra person as he had asked a blind man to come for dinner The wife told him that in that case she would prepare meal for two extra persons When the husband asked her why she should prepare for two, her reply was that a blind man would never come alone; he would always be led by another

A blind man cannot come alone If you seek pleasure in the objects of the senses, pain will inevitably accompany it If you are united with God, you will have endless joy and peace. Then you will be unaffected by gain or loss, honour or dishonour Ramdas' own experience is this He was living the life of an ordinary man like any of you In pursuit of God, he had filled himself with the thought of God At this time, though he was reduced to the condition of a beggar, he was enjoying pure bliss. Kings could not dream of the happiness Ramdas was experiencing Ramdas would not exchange places with them Thus he found out that it is not external circumstances that make us happy or unhappy, but it is our internal state and our outward attitude to circumstances. In the Bhagavad Gita there is a sloka

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥

"Alike in pleasure and pain, who dwells in the Self, to whom a clod of earth, stone and gold

are alike, to whom the dear and the undear are alike, firm, the same in censure and praise (He is said to have crossed beyond the Gunas.)"

This is the state which is held out as the highest in the Bhagavad Gita. You have to transcend the pairs of opposites Otherwise you are like a scared animal at the sacrificial altar You are afraid at every moment that something bad is in store for you. But you are in a state of equipoise if you are one with God. Do not strive to get things from outside. Then you will be satisfied with what God gives you Contentment is a perpetual feast It can come to you only when you have got the self-existent bliss It is there already in your heart You have to be conscious of it This happens only by His grace God's radiance, beauty, manifests in you by your chanting His name By constant remembrance of Him you can purify yourselves and be fit for His vision.

Ramdas is supremely happy to see you all here He looks upon you not merely as friends, but as the manifestations of his Beloved. He has not come to speak to you as a Teacher, but only as a servant to his Master. In the passport issued to Ramdas by the Government of India, it has been mentioned that he is a Hindu missionary. This is not correct. He has come only as a servant of God to do service He had prayed to God not to spare him, but to wear him out in His service. God is using him that way. Ramdas is happy over it

Q. Where is your Ashram?

Ramdas: In South India

Q: Do you teach Yoga in your Ashram?

Ramdas. We teach Bhakti Yoga — the path of devotion to God

Q: Any spiritual exercises?

Ramdas: No special spiritual exercises. The devotees sit in any posture for chanting God's holy name and meditating on His glory with a view to unite themselves with Him.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PRAYER

We believe that just as food nourishes the body, prayer nourishes the soul. There are some who love God, but they do not love Him so much as they love worldly objects. So they cannot remember God constantly A man who is attached to wealth cannot be devoted to God Your love for God should be the greatest Then alone your mind will be centred in Him A devotee, Prahlad, while yet a boy, prayed to God, 'Oh God, I do not pray for anything new from you Let my mind run towards you with the same force as it runs towards the objects of the senses' Only the direction of the mind has to be changed, even as we have to change the course of a stream if its waters are not to be lost in desert sands If we direct the stream to the fields we can raise good crops by making use of its water Let the wandering mind be directed to God Then our life would turn fertile and achieve good and great ideals Otherwise it would be wasted away

There is another kind of prayer, 'Oh God, do not grant my prayers, because in my foolishness I may ask for things which are harmful to me' This means, leave everything to Him He knows what is good for us Here the devotee has passed the stage of prayer He has entirely surrendered himself to God, just as a child in the hands of its mother The mother does what is necessary for the child Another devotee prayed in a wonderful way, 'Oh God, you say that we should do spiritual discipline, that we should remember you by chanting your name for a number of years in order to get your Darshan or vision That means we must toil hard in order to get what we aspire for You are then like a shopkeeper If we go to the shop we pay for obtaining things. When you give Darshan only after my toiling like this, it does not mean you are conferring grace on me You are simply paying, as it were, my wages. If you are really gracious you must reveal yourself to me without my doing anything If you say I am not pure and so cannot see you, make me pure and grant me your vision. Then I will call it grace' This

is the highest state of the devotee in which he knows that everything is done by God, and that to say he himself can do anything is utterly false. Our struggle must cease in total surrender to Him. Then only we have Him

ENGLAND

LONDON,

25th September, 1954

Speech at Shanti Sadan of Dr Hariprasad Sastri

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is not prepared to deliver something like a speech on this occasion. We had the intention of coming to Shanti Sadan with the sole object of having the Darshan of Sri Hariprasad Sastriji, and when we asked over the 'phone whether we could come to Shanti Sadan, he willingly agreed and we felt Divine grace had come to us, and accordingly when we came here, he gave us a very warm welcome After a few words with him, which gave Ramdas infinite joy, we are now in your midst and we feel extremely happy

Ramdas is speaking in the third person and you will kindly bear with him Some years ago when God accepted him as His child and servant, the ego-sense in him disappeared and from that time he has been speaking about himself in the third pesrson Ramdas is a child and servant of God and as such by God's command he has come to Europe, and from here he is going to the United States of America, Japan and other places round the world The sole object with which he was sent round the world by God is to spread the ideal of universal love and service

CHARM OF WORDS—LOVE AND SERVICE

Love and service — these two words have a great fascination and charm for Ramdas Love is of two kinds: human love and divine love Human love relates to the physical part of us — the appearance, and divine love relates to the immortal Spirit dwelling within us What we have to cultivate is divine love. This can be achieved only when we realise our real nature and being Divine love is based on our knowledge of the Self. This love naturally expresses itself in service and that service, as it is based on the negation of the ego, is pure and selfless

Love then becomes universal in its character and content. In this connection Ramdas is reminded of the advice of Yajnavalkya to Maitreyi, 'Love your husband not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Self Love your father, mother and son not for the sake of the physical relationship, but for the sake of the Self.' In every one of us the same Self exists and we are only so many expressions of the Self. If we want to truly love another, we can do so only when we know that we are not different from him and he is but another body of ours. Verily, the immortal Self within us has assumed innumerable forms So we have to see the whole universe as the expression of the Self Then only our love flows out in floods to all beings and creatures in the world equally We cannot but like everybody alike, irrespective of caste, creed or nationality This is the love we have to gain and from this love proceeds service which is rendered equally to all beings Wherever we see people suffering and in distress, there our heart goes out and we serve them So you will see that universal service is based on universal love and universal love is based on universal vision, which is again based on the knowledge of the Self.

DO NOT LIVE LIKE ANIMALS

This is the aim and object of human existence God has granted us this human body in order that we may realise the glory of our Divine existence in which individual consciousness is absent In fact, we are one with God at all times But we have forgotten this truth and therefore we feel separated from Him The sense of separation will go when the light of knowledge dawns in us This knowledge gives us the realisation that we are one with Him and that He Himself is manifest as the whole universe Therefore to feel one with Him is to feel one with all the beings and creatures in the world Firstly, we have to realise that we are the Self and not the body. The sense of separation between us and the Self is due to the veil of ignorance that covers our souls It is when this veil is broken that we realise our unity, i e, see unity

in diversity and oneness in multiplicity This is the goal of human existence If we do not attain this blessed state, we will be living only like animals enjoying the pleasures of the senses, remaining always conscious of the body Our aspiration should be to realise the Self and allow our body to wear itself out in the service of everybody

THERE IS NONE SO DEAR AS GOD

Thus universal love and universal service go together. To propagate this ideal Ramdas has been going from place to place as willed by his Divine Master This does not mean that you do not possess this ideal Ramdas has come to talk to you all about God — the universal Truth, who is so dear to him, who is the breath of his breath, the soul of his soul and the life of his life God is dear to you also He is the deity of your heart and no other object is so dear to you as He When we all talk about the supreme Truth we feel our union with Him and also know that we are His expressions and we thereby realise a peace that passeth all understanding The peace comes to us only by tuning our mind with God. When we live in this eternal peace we realise the unity of all creation and produce an atmosphere of harmony and peace The world is lacking this harmony and peace because it has forgotten God The moment all of us tune our hearts with God and remain in the consciousness of Him, the war clouds that hang over us will be scattered and we will have a world filled with peace, harmony, goodwill and happiness

This is the message delivered to us by the ancient Rishis of India and great souls from other parts of the world We have to make our lives sublime by following their teachings We should divinise our existence by realising that we and God are not separate and therefore we and the universe are not separate. If we only listen and act up to their inspired teachings, we can make our life supremely blessed.

With these few words you will kindly permit this child to close this short speech.

LONDON,

26th September, 1954.

Speech at the Hindu Association of Europe, London.

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is a humble child of God. By His will he has left India on a world tour with the object of propagating the ideal of universal love and service Universal love and service is based upon universal vision Again universal vision is based upon the knowledge of God as the immutable, all-pervading, static Brahman. On the realisation of this state alone we can practise true love and service Love and service can be possible only when we are free from selfishness Where there is no selfishness, our life flows out spontaneously in the service of our fellow beings. In this vision of the Reality we realise the oneness of mankind through the Spirit Although we appear to be different from each other on the surface, at the base we are one. This is the message of Vedanta and of all the great sages of the world As we have not recognised the inner kinship of the Spirit, we are creating so much chaos in the world. We are having, what you call, a cold war and we are anticipating another world catastrophe These can be avoided provided we unite ourselves in the spirit in which the great Rishis of old want us to live Then only we can spread the waves of peace that will bring an atmosphere of peace and harmony everywhere. So, Ramdas' object in going from place to place is to awaken humanity to the consciousness of God in whose light alone we can stand together as one and prevent the onrush of another war

THE MESSAGE OF THE VEDANTA

It was thirty-three years ago that God took this child up and made him His own. From that time his one task has been to talk about God to those who are interested in the subject We are all assembled here in a spirit of brotherhood. Of course, brotherhood is essential, but it must be based not merely upon physical co-operation but

on our spiritual unity. We must feel that we are not merely bodies, but the immortal Spirit, all-pervading. Although we apparently seem to be separate from one another, essentially we are one We have to develop this consciousness In order to do that we must be devoted to God who is seated in the heart of every one of us God is not far away from us, in the temple, church or mosque. We must be devoted to Him. We must remember Him within us By constantly remembering Him we can break the veil that separates us from Him and realise our oneness with Him We are essentially divine, not only inwardly but outwardly also As we are expressions of the Divine, we cannot but be divine externally also The whole universe is described in the Bhagavad Gita as the manifestation of the Divine Arjuna was given the vision to show that the whole universe is nothing but the manifestation of God Every atom of this universe is filled with divine light and power This is what we have to realise We are one not only inwardly, but also in all aspects

This is the message of Vedanta handed down to us from the Rishis and the great Avatars of India The same message, you will find, has been carried throughout the length and breadth of the world by various other Teachers like Jesus Christ and Mohammed Buddha too preached the great truth of Ahimsa and carried it through his disciples to Burma, China, Japan, Siam, &c All these great Teachers taught us that we should live in union with each other and not fight This message is indeed a great treasure that has been inherited by us We are not to live like ordinary persons without trying to realise the centre and essence of our being — God From time to time we must turn our mind from the external to the internal and try to unite our mind with the eternal Source and thereby realise that we are all one, although apparently separate or many In unity alone there is peace In harmony and oneness alone there is peace, not in division, conflicts and diversities These must go They can go only in the light of the experience of the great Truth dwelling

within us For that our mind has to be drawn within from time to time.

THE WAY TO STOP THE TIDE OF WAR

In the workaday world we often complain that we do not find time to think of God. But if we have a will, we can. Where there is a will there is a way. If we retire for five minutes every day to our room and feel His presence within us in meditation, we will be doing a great thing for ourselves and also for others. If we have a peaceful heart we can make others also peaceful and we can spread around us a peaceful atmosphere. That is why we are here. It is not to create discord, but to create harmony and peace. In that way if we can spread goodwill and peace to all the people in the world, we can stop the tide of war completely.

LONDON,
28th September, 1954.

With the Children of the Town and Country School, Eton Avenue, London, N. W 3

Student Which is the most sacred animal in India?

Ramdas · Cow.

Student Why are cows sacred?

Ramdas Because they are the most useful animals. They give us milk, butter etc.

Student: Can you tell us something about your religion?

Ramdas. Ramdas has come to see you all the way from distant India He is very happy to see you You look like little flowers in the garden of God He loves you very much The God that he has found is in the hearts of you all God, apart from you, is no God for him To love you is to love God To look at you is to look at God If you want to see God, you must see Him in your fellow-beings Love them and serve them, This is the true worship of God God is not far away in heaven, but He is here with you at all times You must pray to Him, remember Him and think of Him By praying to Him you make your life pure and glorious If you want to walk on the path of righteousness and truth, you should pray to Him constantly, open your heart to Him and allow His light and grace to pour into you and thus make your life divine What more can Ramdas tell you? Ramdas has told you what he knew about God He would wish that you should also believe in God and draw inspiration from Him by loving Him, by praying to Him and allowing His light and power to work in you so that you may grow up into true citizens not merely of London or England, but of the world.

Student. Please speak something in your own language.

Ramdas Yes. Ramdas will recite for you one or two Sanskrit Slokas:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥
सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

Student: What is the meaning of that?

Ramdas: These are the words from the Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus, in which are embodied the teachings of a great incarnation of God whose name is Krishna In the first Sloka the Lord says: 'To those people who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious I bring full security' The second Sloka means. 'Abandoning all duties, come unto Me alone for shelter; sorrow not, I will liberate thee from all sins'

Student (another class). Are there snakes coming into your houses in India?

Ramdas. Yes. There are snakes in India. Tigers and leopards too.

Student: That is too much for me!

Ramdas: There are jungles near the place we live in, and jackals frequently move about at nights. Sometimes leopards also come.

Student. Do elephants also come out there?

Ramdas. Yes. We see them sometimes passing in the streets.

Student: How do people get on when leopards and tigers move about?

Ramdas. They don't come into the towns. People prevent them from coming near They are shot sometimes But some holy men live fearlessly in caves and jungles Leopards go near them and do no harm. Some of these holy men touch the leopards and play with them.

Student: Why don't the leopards harm them then?

Ramdas: Because these holy men love them. Once you love them, they won't harm you You must have heard the story of St Francis of Assisi who used to have a lion with him

Student: What happens if we are not nice to them?

Ramdas: They try to do harm to us then Therefore, we must be nice and kind to them, love them just as we love the dogs in our house

Student. You can't do that with snakes, can you?

Ramdas: Yes, we can. In Ramdas' own case a snake once wound round his leg, but did him no harm. Ramdas was not afraid of it. He did not hurt it It did not hurt him

CHICHESTER, SUSSEX

29th September, 1954.

With Mr. H T. Hamblin

at Bosham House

HEALING AND KUNDALINI

Mr. H T. Hamblin. I met Brother Mandus. He goes about healing. He has a gift of healing. People go to him to get healed. He puts his hand on them, and many of their diseases heal. Not always successful, of course. I have seen people who were crippled with arthritis, etc. He just goes to them, holds the arm and joints, fits the dislocated part in the right place, and they get up and walk away. This sort of work he does He gives also long lectures. I went to take the chair at two meetings of his in London When I first went to see him he was sitting in his room with his back upright, breathing long, his eyes gazing upwards and with a heavenly glow on his face. I did not disturb him. He came to me later and seized hold of me and said, 'I have been waiting for you all these years'. We sat down in silence

Brother Mandus and myself sat in the same chair, bolt upright I began breathing deeply and immediately I felt a tremendous spiritual force right at the bottom of the spine I cannot describe it Then it began to grow up, up the spine and was getting higher and higher till it went right up to my head and to the top I happened to mention this afterwards to a friend who had read about these things. He said it was the Kundalini experience Is it right?

Ramdas: Yes.

HTH: I know nothing about Kundalini, though I have it When I sat with you I felt the glow of the Spirit much nicer I felt it all round and reaching over my head. I never had such an experience before.

Ramdas: Kundalini is the divine power within us hidden in the Muladhara centre at the bottom of the

spine. From there the power rises and, through the nerve called Sushumna in the backbone, it goes up from centre to centre and you get strange experiences and symptoms There are six centres and when the Kundalini rises to each centre, the person passes through various experiences It sometimes happens that in the company of highly evolved souls the Kundalini rises. Due to the high power developed by that person it is that you had that experience in his company Such an association itself is enough to awaken that power and make it rise in you When it rises you feel a peculiar sensation When it reaches the heart centre you get a strange joy and peace filling your entire body. When it goes to the forehead you see visions or flashes or divine forms, and peace pervades your entire body. When it reaches the top of the head known as the Sahasrara centre, you attain God-realisation It is the union of Ishwara and Shakti, God and His power. When they are united you get illumination, that is, the realisation or vision of God That is the science of Kundalini as described in some books on the subject The feeling at the backbone and the sensation of something rising up are due to Kundalini only This happens even when we are doing prayers or are in a prayerful mood During meditation and prayer, when our body is forgotten and when we are in tune with the Divine within us, Kundalini rises and we feel a strange ecstasy in union with the Divine This is true in the case of all spiritual aspirants and highly evolved souls In those who have surrendered their will to the Divine will, this power is manifested You will see their faces radiating light with a halo round their head

TRANSMISSION OF SPIRITUAL POWER

The Divine is not far off He is within us Be conscious of Him and you feel His presence every minute within you Healing power also comes to you automatically Healing is not done purposely sometimes By your very touch the person is healed In the scriptures it is said that Divine power is transmitted to another in three

ways — by thought, sight and touch A saint can, by his thought, at once spiritually awaken a man By looking into the eyes of a person he pours into him the Divine power by which he is awakened from within The same thing is done by touch also. This very power can be used for healing diseases too of persons. The terms in Sanskrit for these three ways of spiritual transmission are Manan, Darshan and Sparshan. We have heard that Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the great saint of Bengal, touched Narendra, who was later known as Swami Vivekananda, in the chest and at once he went into a super-conscious state He lost body consciousness and sat silent, absorbed in the Spirit. He could not easily come down from it He was so much in the grip of that power within Very often it happens that when one is in a trance, he will not easily come back to the body-idea He loses himself *in that. Ramdas was having such spiritual experiences* in the course of his quest. They are common to you also It is not a new thing.

HTH: May I tell you something else?

Ramdas: Yes; do.

HTH. A woman came here twenty years ago. She came all the way from Canada She had not much money with her She came in a cargo boat She entered my office. That was the hottest day of the year. She had a bandage round her neck. She sat in the office and told me what she was doing in America. She was a teacher and had also to look after a church She had to find money for it. She had to work. and strain and struggle. It was all strain and struggle So it went on until she became weak and was in bed She came here led by the Spirit, of course. She told me all about her and it took about an hour. I asked a question I had no idea of saying anything But God took hold of my tongue When she got to the end, I found myself saying 'The way of the Spirit is harmony and peace' She felt she was expanding and expanding and had the consciousness of the Infinite. She got up and said she knew why she came here I do not think anything about

healing. I just listen. I don't do anything else. It was remarkable I think it is all the work of the one Spirit.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Ramdas. Yes, that is perfectly true. God's ways are wonderful

Richard Whitwell: When did you leave India?

Ramdas On the 17th of last month

RW. You are going all round the world?

Ramdas. Yes We have gone all over the Continent We went to Rome, Switzerland, Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and we are here We are going to the United States and thence to Japan and back to India via Malaya and Ceylon God's ways are wonderful. We are meeting groups of friends all over the world We have some questions and answers, and talks It is going on like this

RW It is very wonderful

Ramdas We have been wishing long to see you both You are so far away from us that there was no possibility of meeting Now God has brought us together and enabled us to talk to you in person We are extremely happy

RW There is some kindred spirit between us, and the two magazines — 'The Vision' and 'The Science of Thought Review' — have some relationship.

Ramdas. Yes. As between us, there is some relationship between the magazines too. We have been always reading your book-reviews in the magazine Your articles are also so inspiring and give solace to many Many of those who are attached to our Ashram are reading The Science of Thought Review numbers with great profit. It contains very inspiring teachings

RW. We also pray that they may be seven times better.

HTH: Seventy-seven times better When we are writing, God knows who is going to read, and so on

EKTAR-ONE STRING-ONE SOUND

Ramdas: He makes you write and He makes you spread the message everywhere. There is an instrument in India, a strange instrument which has got only one string. When you play on it, it produces one sound So all our doings have got one string and that is God. This one refrain, this one symphony, is the divine Spirit and nothing else We live, move and have our being in Him. Only we have to know it. God has not to be brought from anywhere and made to sit in us. He is there always within us We must only become aware of Him If this awareness comes to us by His grace, we are perennially happy. No more thought of the morrow. All thoughts are washed away His presence is felt every moment of our life There is no effort there. It is effortless dwelling in God continuously for all the time

RW: Have you enjoyed your journey? Krishna Bai too?

Ramdas: Ramdas is all right, but air travel does not much agree with Mother Krishna Bai

ANGEL WINGS

RW We have never been on the air yet

Ramdas: We have been going by air all along. Somebody remarked we are using Garuda-vahan Lord Krishna has a vehicle of a kite

RW Did you buy angel wings?

Ramdas: Angel wings have been converted into aeroplanes. So much time is saved going by air Have you a copy of our programme?

HTH: It is appalling from the human point of view.

Ramdas. Yes Many are wondering — Ramdas to take such a trip at this age! We want to return before the winter sets in In spite of the cold here and in some parts of France, we are getting on well We were in Geneva with Mr. Jean Herbert who has translated many Indian books into French.

SPIRITUAL TEMPERATURE

RW: How is the spiritual revival in India? Is it taking place? I am sure it is

Ramdas: Yes, there is a revival. We have been going all over India every year and have met several friends. We find there is an awakening, as it were, in the hearts of all people and they are striving to realise God. This aspiration is rising in the hearts of thousands We go to North India and at every place thousands come and crowd round Ramdas and want to know how to realise God and what they should do for it

RW They want it more than the people in the West; is it so?

Ramdas: Percentage of people who want it may be more in India There is still in the West something like an awakening There is spiritual hunger.

RW I think it is more underneath than manifest

Ramdas. But it will come up During the last one month we have been going to several places in the Continent and we have contacted several groups of spiritual aspirants and we find their hunger is very very keen

RW. How would you compare the spiritual temperature in India to that, say, in England? In America you will recognise the tremendous difference But you will have to wait for it

Ramdas. Ramads has a mind to write his impressions of his tour all over the world and publish it*. But if he mentally goes back to see what he felt during the tour in the Contient, he would say he did not at all feel anything extraordinary He felt quite at home in all these places just as he was in India The love which friends showered on him was equal in intensity and in its power and in its beauty He is meeting you here and he finds the same atmosphere as he is finding in India There is no difference What is there to compare between the East and West? East and West are all God's countries. God dwells every-

*The book 'World is God' has been published by Anandashram.

where. Ramdas meets Him everywhere. How can he make out which is lower and which is higher? He lives everywhere Whether Ramdas lives in the hotel or houses of friends, he meets with nothing but love. Therefore it is difficult for him to judge and he does not very often lend himself to judging things He feels quite at home wherever he is. Now he has come to your house and he feels quite at home, a child has come to its own home The friends whom we meet are so loving They may be strangers, but for him they are so loving When you recognise the divine Spirit in each and everybody, there is no question of comparison That is the position

RW When I said that, I did not mean anything like comparing or criticising I have no wish to get the impressions of ordinary people, but I would like some day to know your inward feeling as to what I called the temperature, whether in India it is stronger than here But what I feel is that we all want mutual help.

Ramdas· That is why perhaps God has brought Ramdas here, in order that he may talk about God with you all Some people ask why Ramdas is coming to Western countries He knows that is the place to talk about God, because God is the dear object of everybody, and when we all talk together about God who is so dear, we create an atmosphere of love, peace and joy. That is why God has sent him on this travel We thus enjoy union with Him and thereby union with others. He finds that hunger for such a union and communion is evident everywhere. To find out the temperature he was feeling the pulse and it is perfectly normal everywhere.

THREE RIVERS MERGE IN ONE

RW When we come together ..

Ramdas. When we come together, just as three rivers come together and meet as one, so we may consider ourselves for the present as three rivers meeting together and becoming one We bathe in that river It is believed that any person, who goes and bathes in the place where the three rivers meet, is purified So thousands

go there and take their bath and consider they are perfectly purified and made holy Verily, we must make all the rivers meet the ocean in which all can bathe and enjoy divine bliss and peace

RW: That one ocean is God!

Ramdas. God is the one ocean and we are all rivers. In that ocean all of us merge and become one. If we want to realise unity and harmony in the world, we must love each other on the basis of the spiritual kinship we bear to each other. That is the only relationship which is real amongst us This is everlasting All the relationship on the surface is of no importance When we are united in the Spirit, there will be harmony everywhere, peace everywhere God is our parent We are all His children Let us live together in perfect harmony and peace. Why should there be fights, and why should we try to do harm to each other? In expression or manifestation we appear different, but in Spirit we are one. The example is given of gold We take a lump of gold and make various ornaments from it The ornaments may assume different shapes, but the gold is the same in all. Spirit is the same Though we are different forms of the Divine, we are really one.

LET US BE CHILDLIKE AND NOT CHILDISH

RW. Where such consciousness is present, war is unthinkable.

Ramdas. Ramdas is going to tell people, 'Fear not, depend upon the Spirit, war will not and shall not take place Depend upon the power of the Spirit! Make that power reveal itself in you Do not float on the surface Go deep within yourself and feel you are the Spirit God is there Seek His guidance and He will take you on the right path so that you can live together harmoniously Why should we, like foolish children, fight with each other? This is most deplorable

FOUR STAGES IN SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

HTH: May I ask a question? When you arrive

at God-consciousness and realise that you are everywhere, what comes next?

Ramdas: There are four stages. Ramdas will describe them One is that by complete surrender to the Divine will, the ego is dissolved completely. Egolessness means realisation of the all-pervading Spirit or God. Then we know that we and that Spirit are one So long as the ego persists we are not aware of that Spirit and we do not know our identity with It. After that comes the vision of the Divine everywhere in the manifestation; the whole universe is thereafter seen as the expression of that Spirit. We see God everywhere But there is a third stage still In that we see the manifest and the unmanifest as the two aspects of another which is beyond both, which is unthinkable, incomprehensible and inexpressible. We can express something about the static and the dynamic aspects, that is, the aspects without form and with form, but that which is beyond both these is inexpressible, incomprehensible and ineffable The dynamic, the static and the unthinkable all together make the supreme Godhead. He is the all-inclusive and all-transcendent Reality. Even after realising that, there is the fourth stage in which we keep up a relationship with God. It is purely personal He is our constant companion. We can talk to Him We can feel His presence That is the sweetest relationship. Having had all the earlier experiences we still enjoy a close relationship with the Divine in His personal presence, and that presence Ramdas has been asked by so many to define But it is not possible to define that. He is the impersonal person.

INFINITE PERSONAL

RW: Or call it the Infinite Personal.

Ramdas: Yes The Infinite is impersonal, still It is personal. You are feeling His companionship When, several years ago, Ramdas was wandering in the Himalayas, he used to converse with Him There was with him the Impersonal Person He could commune with Him, he could talk to Him Even now he does it, but very rarely.

Because, He is from within, inspiring and guiding Ramdas every moment. As such he is moving and having his life, all in a state of complete freedom and ecstasy. The ecstasy abides with him twenty-four hours without effort At one time, some effort was necessary for Ramdas, such as practising the disciplines, chanting of God's name continuously and observance of so many vows All these are gone through by His will, and even then Ramdas was conscious that God was making him do all things He never had known moments of depression or disappointment If anything happened and he felt it ought not to have happened, he submitted to God's will. In that way he never had any reaction on his mind and the mind was always dwelling in the Divine by continuous remembrance, by continuous chanting of the Divine name which his Guru gave him. He used to keep his mind ever merged in Him. This was all due to the grace of God Ramdas never thought that it was by his own will that he did it God had taken him in His hands and was preparing him. After He had prepared him completely, God let him go. All the Sadhana then automatically stopped and he has been a child of God and is freely moving about under His guidance and protection He thought it fit to send Ramdas outside India The universe is his home, and he is going from one country to another as he is going from one room to another. He does not see any difference between England and India He meets the same Beloved everywhere You are all forms of his Beloved. Why should he then feel himself a stranger anywhere? He is not a stranger here He is one with you He is your eternal companion in the Spirit

ALL SAINTS DRAW FROM THE SAME WELL OF DIVINITY

HTH I always feel that Indian readers understand me better than Englishmen.

Ramdas · Yes You speak in the language of the Indians So they understand you Only there may be a slight difference in the terminology, but the secret of what you write is the same as what was taught to us long ago The experience is the same

RW: Is it not lovely to realise that it is so?

Ramdas: When we read your articles we see the underlying principle is exactly similar to what we read in Hindu scriptures. That is why people are getting so much benefit by reading your teachings.

HTH: Once a man — a scholar — wrote to me that my editorial note was pure Vedanta. I do not know what it meant. I have not heard a word of Vedanta. That is the way the Spirit works.

Ramdas: Yes. When you have that internal experience — when you have been in tune with God — when you have realised God within yourself, it is He who inspires you to write. Naturally, the saints who have realised the Truth speak in the same language, because it is the same experience for all of them and they cannot differ. Because, what comes from them is from the same Supreme One. The language of God is one language. The external garb may be different, but the inner import cannot differ. You must have read the book, 'Cosmic Consciousness' by Richard Bucke. In it he has compared the teachings of great Teachers of the world. He shows the similarity in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna and other God-realised souls. They signify the same thing. There is absolutely no difference. That shows the spiritual experience of all the saints in the world is the same, because they are inspired by the same Source. It is God speaking through them. Vedanta teaches us that everything is Brahman — everything is God — सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म 'Verily, all this is God'. This is the primary teaching. Realise this. Know that you are He and know everything is He. The Bhagavad Gita too speaks of the same thing. Everything that is, is God.

RW: Therefore there are not many religions, but only one religion.

Ramdas: Yes, and that is the Universal Religion.

YOU HAVE TO TRANSCEND PRAYER

HTH: We do not chant God's name here, but we have an inward prayer which we go on repeating. That

amounts to the same thing When I had to pray for things, I found I had only to thank Him. I went on saying, 'Thank Thee ! Thank Thee !' That became a practice and I found that there was a glow in the heart That is one way

Ramdas In the Ashram we repeat God's name and go about doing our work We must transcend the stage of prayer also Because, utter dependence on God does not admit of any prayer We live and move in Him Then why pray to Him ? We are completely under His protection and we are aware of it A child has nothing to pray to its mother when the mother looks after it The mother knows what is good for the child We had read a poem, the heading of which was, 'Unanswered Prayers' The author says, "O God ! Do not grant my prayers In my foolishness I may ask for so many things which are not good for me Give me only what is best for me" This stage also must pass We need not pray We are perfectly confident that He is doing everything for our good In whatever way He makes us live, we must reconcile ourselves to it, taking it that God has done these things for our good only.

Good and bad are mental attitudes In the Absolute, that is, in God, there is no evil We reconcile ourselves to everything that happens in our life taking them as given to us by God He is all goodness and mercy From Him evil cannot come Evil is of man's own making Man takes certain situations as evil and suffers Certain other situations he considers as good and is happy If we go beyond these dualities, then good and evil have no meaning for us The same is the case with the so-called loss and gain, success and failure, praise and blame These terms have no significance for us because we enjoy internal bliss, which is eternal Why do we care whether the world praises us or not ? But the man who clings on to these worldly things wants honour and praise, when he gets them he is happy and when he does not, he is unhappy His life is like a pendulum moving betwixt a smile and a tear Suffering is necessary for spiritual growth just

as manure is to plants Sufferings will later on be transmuted into joy.

KINGS ENVIED RAMDAS' HAPPINESS

Ramdas never felt discomforts as such He took everything to be for his good and he was perfectly happy God's grace was pouring on him continuously and there was no time for him to think of any situation as causing sorrow and therefore he was perfectly blissful. At that time he found out that it was not any external situation that made us happy or unhappy, but our state of mind. The poor man in the hut remembers God and is very happy. He is satisfied with what God gives him and is perfectly happy, living a simple and quiet life Millionaires are often the most miserable ones There is an English saying, 'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown' The man who is feeling the presence of God within him and dwells in the Spirit alone is the happiest man When Ramdas was going from place to place, he was a veritable mendicant — such ones are allowed in India to go about freely — and whenever he felt hungry, he would ask for alms which some one would give him. He would then go into solitude and think of God always At that time he had nothing with him for personal comforts Still he was in a state of divine ecstasy. People were wondering how he could afford to smile under such circumstances. He had to lie down on road sides But kings and millionaires envied him for his happiness. They could not dream of it. We can never be unhappy in any situation when we have found the divine peace and bliss within us by constant tuning of our mind with God. Nothing can affect us Nothing can disturb our inward peace Therefore, Ramdas says, "Why are you running after these bubble-like pleasures of the world? Have the bare necessities of life but remember God and feel His presence with you. Tune your mind to the Divine existence and be happy, living an honest and truthful life. That will grant you a harvest of peace."

This is carrying coals to Newcastle Still Ramdas is talking to you because he cannot contain himself. He is simply pouring himself out He is telling you just like a child telling its mother its experiences He talks only in that spirit and not in a spirit of teaching

HEAVENLY FOOD AND DRINK

HTH The peace of God transcends happiness

Ramdas Yes. Peace is deeper.

HTH What the world calls happiness is transitory Real happines is something higher than that That is peace of God and that takes in everything That is better than happiness, is it not?

RW That is what Christ called Joy, is it not? — the heavenly food and the heavenly drink!

HTH We are going to have some food and drink in a minute.

Ramdas That is also heavenly. God is everything The food is also He The Upanishad says अन्नं च ब्रह्म 'Food also is God' This vision transcends all relative terms To talk of God means to live in Eternity. That is why we are bubbling with joy.

LONDON,

30th September, 1954

Speech at 'The Open Way' of Dr Graham Howe, 14 A, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W. 1

OBJECT OF DEVOTION

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is a child of God He introduces himself to you as such He finds himself in your midst and is extremely happy He has been asked to speak on 'The Object of Devotion' He is not in the habit of delivering lectures. So when he was told that he was to deliver a lecture today, he was a bit surprised. He gives only small talks and when questions are put to him he tries to answer them, solving the various problems placed before him This was what was done in all the places he visited on the Continent. He addressed small groups answering the questions put to him, and now you have asked him to speak on 'The Object of Devotion' The object of devotion is naturally God

God is very dear to us because He dwells in our heart and our object in life is to realise Him, to know Him to see Him, to feel Him and to have Him always with us This is the object of life Very often we miss this object We are after so many things of the world which make us forget God What we have to do is to remember Him constantly and do such things as will enable us to remember Him Our life must be lived in such a way that we can be in constant communion with God

NATURE OF DEVOTION IS LOVE

The nature of devotion, as described by one of the great saints of India, is supreme love If we have real devotion for God, our hearts will be full of that supreme love for Him. Such love is by itself sufficient to make us realise God No other spiritual discipline is necessary to keep our minds away from the worldly pleasures, than to saturate our minds with love of God This is the

positive way. This is what is called the Open Way.' Because, when you have intense love for God, you will remember Him constantly. Just as when you bring light in a room, darkness automatically disappears, so when love for God fills your heart, all desires for the transitory objects of life leave you. This is the result of having devotion for God. For it is said that devotion or love for God is self-sufficient.

REMEMBRANCE FOSTERS LOVE

Devotees therefore say: "I want love for you, O God! I want your remembrance, I do not want anything else." Continuous remembrance of God is the way by which we can develop love for Him and be conscious of His existence within us and everywhere about us. God is not far away from us. We need not go in search of Him to temples, churches or to places of pilgrimage. He is ever dwelling within us. Forgetfulness makes us feel that we are not in His presence and that we do not have Him with us. A child, when it misses the mother, is restless. When the mother is near, it is happy and cheerful. So it is that through forgetfulness we miss the Divine who is always with us. As Ramdas has already said, the easiest way to feel His presence is to remember Him constantly. This child of God was made to repeat God's name continuously, ceaselessly. By such repetition he had an unbroken stream of divine consciousness within him and that enabled him to feel His presence always. When you feel His presence, you find real happiness and peace. Devotion should be for the sake of realising Him and not for acquiring the things of the world.

FOUR KINDS OF DEVOTEES

The Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus, describes four kinds of devotees. Sri Krishna says:

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ।

'Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me, O Arjuna, the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth, and the wise, O Lord of the Bharatas' The first is the Aarta, one in distress. He prays to God to be cured of some disease By His grace he gets rid of the disease as a result of the prayer. The second kind of devotee is the Jijnasu or seeker of Truth He wants nothing but Jnana or Self-knowledge He wants realisation of God, and does not pray for any material benefits The third is the Artharthi, who prays for wealth, progeny, name, fame and other material benefits The fourth kind of devotee is the Jnani His is the devotion that comes after gaining Jnana, after seeing or realising God Even after realising oneness with Him, he still remains devoted to Him He is the Jnani-Bhakta. This is considered to be the highest kind of devotion.

When our heart entirely goes to Him and is full of joy and peace, our remembrance of Him becomes constant and through such remembrance we ultimately realise our identity with Him. We want to continue to love Him For that purpose we assume a separate relationship with Him and take ourselves to be different from Him We then love Him as a child loves its mother or a servant his master

VALUE OF SATSANG

Ramdas had the grace of God thirty-three years ago which changed his life entirely. It was a wonderful transformation It is by His grace that you get aspiration to attain God, and thereafter develop a longing for the contact of a saint. The saint's contact crowns the spiritual experience with success In the early stages the struggle is very keen, but when you get the contact of a divine personality, your progress becomes unimpeded You rush towards the Divine without any obstruction, because the grace received from the saint helps you all through It is wonderful to have the contact of a saint. It is very difficult to get it, but when you once have it, you may depend upon it, you are saved Without it nobody can

find the path and reach the divine goal of Self-realisation. It has been held out as of the first importance by all saints of the world. A soul alone can kindle another soul, not books. You may read any number of books They may be helpful to you intellectually. But if you want to walk on the divine path, to have the needed courage, the strength, the initiative, the contact of a saint is absolutely necessary.

Shankaracharya, a great saint who lived several hundred years ago in India and who is considered to be a philosopher of a very high level, has said:

सत्संगत्वे निःसंगत्वं निःसंगत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वं निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥

Ramdas is not a scholar in Sanskrit He knows only a few Slokas. The meaning of this Sloka is that the contact of saintly souls detaches our mind from the world and attaches it to the Divine the inner Spirit within us Our mind at once changes its direction from the world to God A person who never longed for God begins to long for Him by the contact of a saint The devotee is like the honey bee which is utterly indifferent to the world when it drinks honey from the flower His mind is continuously thinking and meditating on God, as a result of which it becomes perfectly still Stillness of the mind itself is Self-realisation. So long as our mind is restless, we cannot realise that supreme Truth dwelling within us. The moment the mind becomes still we feel the presence of the Divine with us So the whole struggle is to control the mind, Constant remembrance and one-pointed devotion to God is the only way by which we can still the mind which is so fickle. We cannot control the mind easily. By loving God with all our heart through the company of a saint, we shall be able to fill ourselves with His radiance, with His joy, peace and love. There will be no scope for any other desire to cause restlessness of the mind.

THE EASIEST WAY

There are various paths prescribed by various Yogis

and saints of different parts of the world. But Ramdas found that the easiest is the path of devotion You have a relationship with God in the first instance. You take Him as mother and yourself as child, or you take Him as master and yourself as servant In this relationship you think of Him constantly, love Him with all your heart, dedicate all your actions to Him, and thus open yourself for His grace to entirely transform you Now He reveals Himself in all His fullness and splendour within you until at last you realise that you and He are not different You become the very embodiment of the Divine, because you become the mould in which God pours Himself, and you are transformed completely inwardly and outwardly The whole life becomes utterly divine This is the goal to which devotion to God takes you

Ramdas had no other discipline when he was walking on the path of God-realisation. He found the name of God most helpful Many people ask what the name of God can do But those who know the power of the Name can tell you what wonderful potency there is in the Name Ramdas never found any other method so easy as that He tried so many other methods, but it was very difficult to control the mind, whereas by the repetition of God's name the mind was controlled very easily. To repeat God's name is to think and remember Him, and as you remember Him, the Divine hidden within you manifests and fills you through and through

THE POSITIVE WAY

This is the positive way It is not that you have to purify your mind and later realise the Truth. You must bring out God from within your heart and make Him permeate every part of your being. You eliminate everything that is undivine in you automatically. It is just like light making darkness vanish. That is why the name of God is so sweet Ramdas is travelling from place to place with the sole object of extolling the glory of the Divine name. For a person who is on the path of devotion, Name is the only way to keep up a continuous stream of

God-remembrance. When you tune your thought with God, you realise that God alone is real and everything else is false. To say that everything else is false does not mean that the whole world is an illusion. It only means that the diversity you see before you is false. There is unity behind the diversity. Now you behold the whole universe as the Divine. In this vision diversity is found to be false and unity the Truth.

THREE STEPS

There are three steps by which we realise the fullness of divine existence or divine being. Firstly we have to be devoted to God looking upon Him as our father, mother, friend or master, and be thinking of Him constantly. By so remembering Him and devoting ourselves to Him, our mind becomes pure, free from low sense-desires, and a dispassion is developed towards earthly objects. The result is that the mind is constantly attuned to the Divine and this leads to our identity with the Divine through meditation, by rising above the body-idea. This brings you Jnana or knowledge of the Self in which there is no duality. We realise that God and we are one. As Jesus had said, 'I and my Father are one.'

In the super-conscious state we are one with God. To realise this Truth is the object of our life. Only in the physical and mental planes we seem to be different from Him. When we rise beyond these two, and dwell in the super-conscious through complete and wholehearted devotion to Him, we realise we and He are one.

There is still another step higher than this. We realise God not merely as the still, calm, all-pervading Spirit, but also as the entire universe of names and forms. This, in Hindu terminology, is called Para Bhakti. Bhakti is the root, dispassion is the tree, Jnana is the flower and Para Bhakti is the fruit. It is a very sweet fruit. When we have the vision of the Reality everywhere, our life is pervaded with sweetness. In fact, in all our actions there is nothing but sweetness. To see is sweetness, to hear is sweetness, to move and do everything is to enjoy

sweetness Sweetness fills every pore of our being When thus our life is sweetened with divine love, power and glory, our eyes see everywhere nothing but the Divine We do not see the world as different from us We see ourselves as the whole world. Just as we look into the mirror and see our own reflection in it, so we see the whole universe as the reflection of our Atman or the Truth we realise in Jnana The supreme Self or Atman reveals Itself as the universe.

Swami Vivekananda has given a fine description of Para Bhakti in his book 'Bhakti Yoga' In the state of Para Bhakti the devotee looks upon the whole universe as the very form of the Divine This is also spoken of in the Bhagavad Gita in the 11th Chapter, which gives a description of the Vishwarupa Darshan Lord Krishna showed His universal form to Arjuna in the battlefield Seeing the cosmic Vision, Arjuna wondered how sublime and terrible it was But he could not stand it He was so much upset that he wanted to have the sweet vision of Lord Krishna in His beautiful Avataric form, with four arms, disc and crown

The Universal Vision is what we have to achieve It can be attained through the power of our devotion to God Devotion is the basis of our life Just as food is required for the body, devotion is required for the soul If we have no devotion in our heart, our soul is starved out It has no peace, no joy and no contentment We are craving and ever craving for things in the world and are never satisfied It is like pouring oil or ghee into the fire in order to put it out. We cannot put out fire that way If we wish to destroy the burning fires in our heart, we must cultivate love for God We must fill our heart with devotion for Him and remember Him constantly. Constant remembrance can come to us only when we have the grace of God As soon as saints bless us, our mind is turned to Him Divine grace comes to us through saints His name is sweeter than nectar.

Ramdas is not telling you anything new, because you are all on the Godward path and you have found what

it is to be in tune with God You know, in union with Him alone we find real peace and real joy, otherwise not. In this world of change, and with our mind ever changing, we do not find any peace except in God. How to find Him? By loving Him with all our heart, by remembering Him constantly. After Ramdas got the Name, for one year he did not know what meditation was and what severe austerities were His Guru gave him God's name and he went on repeating it with all faith and he got ineffable peace and joy His entire physical frame was saturated with ecstasy. The root of devotion is in the Name

LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE GO TOGETHER

If we really love God, we cannot but remember Him How can we forget Him when we have intense love for Him? How can the child forget the mother? We forget God because our love for worldly things is greater than our love for Him Where our love is, there our mind is. A miser is always thinking of wealth as he has great love for wealth. So if we give all the love of our heart for God, automatically we remember Him We do not have to take any lessons for it We need not undergo any special course for it The only thing required is that we must love Him with all our heart. Then alone we shall remember Him constantly. That remembrance will purify us because when remembrance is there, God's light is there and that light purifies us. Our mind will then become absolutely pure and innocent like a child's. Such are dear to God. Therefore Jesus has said 'Until you become like children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven' In Heaven God dwells To be conscious of the Kingdom within, we must be childlike in nature. We are not childlike, but are childish. We must not be foolish children of God; we must be His wise children who have known Him and have seen Him. Then we can talk to Him, have Him always with us, for all the twenty-four hours of the day. We can live, move and have our being in Him and realise our union with Him. After we are once established in

this union with Him, there is nothing for us to achieve. Thereafter we always bask in His grace and presence.

This is the supreme state we can attain by devotion. People think that by wealth, name and glory, they can be happy. But they find no contentment, no rest and no peace. The moment you turn your mind towards God, even for a few minutes, you will feel His presence and you will then know how much peace you get — the peace that passeth all understanding. The peace within you is made manifest Sit by yourself silently, with your mind still, offering yourself completely to Him in a spirit of surrender, and then you will immediately feel His presence. If you practise this for some time you will realise His presence at all times You will always live in Light and there will be no darkness for you

NAME TAKES YOU TO THE HIGHEST SPIRITUAL PEAK

Many forces will be marshalled against you when you are on the Godward path But they cannot stand before the power and glory of God As soon as God's power is manifested, they are put down. If you bring into your mind the greatness of God, all your littleness will disappear. Think of Him as the almighty and your weakness will disappear. Think of Him as all bliss, and your misery will disappear. Think of Him as supreme light and the darkness of your heart will disappear This is the positive way of approach You are not to start from the bottom and struggle upwards You begin from above. You hold on to Him first and everything else is done Seek His grace by constant prayer, by constant communion and meditation Then you will find a wonderful change taking place within you The desires, which you were battling with to conquer, will be easily subdued, not by the use of your strength, but by the power of God By remembering Him you draw from Him the necessary strength to overcome all the desires which have overpowered you. God's power will grant you the awareness of and union with Him, and the vision of God in the universe God's name will take you to the highest peak of Realisation

Great saints performed many hard and severe austerities in order to attain Him, but in the last stage of their life they came to the conclusion that the Divine name is the only means of liberation. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the great sage of Dakshineshwar, who had for twelve years performed various kinds of Tapasya, told his devotees to take the holy name of God Mother Sarada Devi also told the aspirants who came to her to take the holy name of God. What more can we do? Let us remember God, cry to Him just like a child that cries to its mother till she grants what it wants When the all-merciful God is capable of giving us everything that we ask for, why should we not approach Him with all the love and trust of a child? Ramdas is such a child come to you to talk about Him, because He is dear to him and so also to you all. To talk about God is pure joy and happiness

Ramdas is not given to teaching But he is giving out his own experiences in the light of which you may reap some benefit He is touring by God's command. He has been doing so in India for several years from the time God acknowledged him as His son Now it is His will that he should go from India to other countries also and talk to small groups like yours so that he can share with you his joy In joy eternal we feel one with everybody. Physically we seem to be separate, but as the immortal Spirit we are essentially one. It is in this unity we get real joy.

THE TRUE BASIS OF WORLD-UNITY

The world is in a state of discord and dissension because it is not led by the Spirit People have not gone deep down within themselves to find the true basis of world-unity. They are groping on the surface and therefore cannot find unity. They are working only on the intellectual plane by which they think they can achieve harmony But they cannot. On that plane, differences will remain as they are, so also discord.

When Ramdas was about to leave India on the world tour, he asked Ram — God — what was the purpose of His sending this child over the world. Ram said it was to spread the message of universal love and service, to talk to the people about the Universal Spirit. By the knowledge of the Universal Spirit alone you get universal vision, and then universal love and service will automatically follow We must all love one another. Jesus says, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, says, 'I am dwelling in all beings and creatures. If you truly love Me, love Me in all beings and creatures' Buddha, the great Teacher of India who came long before Christ, holds forth the great principle of giving love for hate He says, 'It is not that you should treat with indifference the person who hates you, but you must love him in return' Once, when Buddha was going from place to place, preaching his message of righteousness, he met a critic who abused him. Buddha smiled serenely when he heard the words of insult, and after some time, when the critic had exhausted his vocabulary of abusive words, said, "Brother, I am not at all angry with you. Suppose you offer me an apple and I do not accept it, where will it go ?" "It will come back to me," answered the critic. "Then, let me tell you, I have not received your abuses at all," said Buddha The critic who was abusing him, now fell at his feet If Buddha had received the abuses he would have felt bad about the man But by this way of love, Buddha transformed him altogether.

LOVE UNIFIES

Love is a great unifier. Love is a solvent that dissolves all diversity and produces unity. But to love truly we must have the knowledge of the Self, for on the basis of this knowledge alone we can love all. By Self is meant the Universal Self, not the individual self The same Self that is in me is in you also So you and I are not essentially different. If I do any injury to you, I do injury only to myself. Thus when we know that the Self pervades

everywhere and that all of us are manifestations of the one Self, we cannot but love one another. Then there will be harmony in this world But the world politicians and statesmen do not want to think that way. They want to have various international conferences, leagues and meetings to bring about peace in the world, but nothing good has come out of such efforts.

So what should one do to realise God? He should dedicate all his actions to Him, be always in tune with Him by constant remembrance and meditation If you realise Him, you can make others also realise Him You will share with others the bliss and peace you enjoy When they too realise Him, you will see a growing feeling of universal brotherhood by which all differences among people will be dissolved and unity and harmony will prevail You will thus produce a harmonius atmosphere all over the world

So we should try our best to stem the tide of another war by releasing the force of the Spirit It is quite possible to achieve this Out of millions, even if a hundred or two can develop the soul power through love for all beings, they can stop the coming of the world war, because spiritual force any day is greater than material force Even one man can work wonders by the spiritual force he develops When hundreds join together for the great task, how can war take place? Many friends ask Ramdas if another world war will break out Ramdas says it will not Let us all firmly believe so and set free a peace wave to spread all over the world and touch the hearts of all human beings, and thereby create an atmosphere of harmony and goodwill Even those, who are responsible for war mentally, will have their hearts changed Ignorance is the cause of all quarrel and strife in the world Ignorance is not a crime It does not deserve to be condemned, but it has to be removed And by the power of your love you can remove ignorance If your heart is pure, from it will flow out love which can transform the worst of men into the best of men One, who is trying to harm others through lust for power, will be

disarmed of his evil intentions and his heart will become pure and humble

This is how, by the contact of saints, many people become good We must become spiritual batteries giving peace and joy to everybody. All of us have in us the all-powerful Divine. If only we are conscious of Him and manifest His glory, then we can exercise that benign influence upon others The power of the Soul — God — is wonderful. We cannot adequately describe His greatness When Ramdas tries to express the inexpressible, he is struggling for words. It is said that God can be only experienced and not described When we have Him, we live in perennial joy and pour it out everywhere By sacrificing ourselves for others, we find much more joy than by living a life of selfishness The greatness of saints is fully revealed when they undergo persecution We know that prominent saints of the world were subjected to persecution As they were passing through the ordeal, their divine powers became more and more manifest As a great Poet says, 'Lives of great men may be compared to leaves of aromatic plants. If you simply hold the leaves in your hand, they do not give out any fragrance So it is with great souls Through suffering they do immense good to humanity'

Dr Graham Howe: If you kindly chant for us God's name, it will be very fine.

(Ramnam was then sung for a few minutes and the meeting came to a close)

LONDON,

1st October, 1954

Place 10, Egerton Terrace,
London, S W 3

Talks with Monsieur F Schuon

"WE ARE HINDUS IN SUFI FORM"

Monsieur Schuon It is joy to meet in the name of God

Ramdas Since we heard about you in Geneva, we have been longing to see you and we are happy to meet you here In Geneva your disciples spoke about your coming to London at this time and it is a happy coincidence that we are also here now and we could meet

M S You gave blessings to all our friends in Switzerland and here

Ramdas It was a joy to meet them

M S May be, we come to you tomorrow morning.

Ramdas We shall be so happy if you can come. We are leaving England the day after tomorrow

M S We all love very much the Hindu way of approach But we had a Muslim Guru, who was a Sufi, and therefore we are Sufis But at heart we are like Hindus — Hindus in the Sufi form. We like Sri Shankara, Ramanuja, Ramakrishna and all Hindu saints All my life I had hoped to have Satsang and to know Hindu saints But I could never meet a Hindu saint so far. We have been in Bombay for two days only Now, through God's will, I have the joy to make contact with a Hindu saint It is, indeed, a great pleasure for us

Ramdas We have heard also so much about Sufism. We have some friends in Bombay who are Sufis Formerly they were in Pakistan We find there is no difference between the Bhakti path of the Hindus and the path of the Sufis.

M. S. There are many ways of approach to God, to suit peoples of different temperaments. So, the forms may be different, but the inner side of spirituality is the same, as one Truth alone is.

Ramdas. You may kindly sing the name of God We would like to hear you. A Sufi friend in Geneva sang the name of God So you can just sing together and we will be so happy.

M S · We know only Arabic.

Ramdas God's name is sweet whether it is Arabic or any other language.

HEART WITH GOD AND HANDS AT WORK

A *Sufi Devotee*. When we were with you, you were speaking about women who were carrying water on their heads and although they could talk and laugh, still their attention was always on the pots You compared this attention of theirs with the attention we should have on God when we are working in the world. This is a very difficult thing to acquire, and people very often become discouraged because they do not achieve this concentration on God when they are doing worldly duties What advice do you give them? For us, we live a very busy life and so it is all the more difficult

Ramdas. We are not working all the twenty-four hours We might be working eight to ten hours at the most We have the rest of the time at our disposal When we are free from work we can concentrate upon God who is within us by chanting His name. If we practise this every day, even say, for fifteen minutes, with great devotion, then at other times also we shall have a current of divine remembrance running through us spontaneously. Even when we are active in the world our mind will be in tune with God, and the name of God will be ringing in our heart automatically without any effort This is quite possible Great saints carried on their worldly activities even after they realised God

Kabir was one such saint. He was a great Sufi saint of India He was a weaver by caste Even when he was

working the loom, his mind was in tune with God through the chanting of God's name. He was saying, "I am not working the loom It is God who is working the loom" His mind was so absorbed in God that he thought it was God who did everything, and when the work was over and the cloth was removed from the loom, he would say it was woven by God There was a saint among potters who was preparing pots His mind was absorbed in God, and he felt God was making the pots. The power that is active in us is God's power It is God's will that works If we surrender ourselves to Him by constantly remembering Him through the power of the Name, then we feel we are not doing anything by ourselves, but the divine power in us does everything In this state if we do any work, it will not be done from the individualistic or egoistic standpoint, but from the universal stand-point. Because, it is the universal power that is active in us and makes us talk, walk and do everything This is a state of complete surrender which we attain through constant remembrance of God by the repetition of His name

In Sanskrit the word for remembrance is Smaran Smaran is the easiest way of approach to God. The moment you take His name, you become aware of Him The tongue and the mind must always be repeating His name and be thinking of Him It is said that the remembrance of God must be so continuous and unbroken that it should be like a stream of oil poured from one vessel to another

During your off hours or leisure moments you have to practise the repetition of God's name for one or two years Then the mind gets so used to the remembrance of God's name that it will naturally go on remembering Him even when we are active, and it will get absorbed in divine consciousness As those women who were carrying water pots on their heads were talking and telling stories to each other, while their attention on their pots was not lost, we can also do work in the world keeping our mind centred in God In such work there will be no question of selfishness and consequent suffering and pain to others The

heart will be filled with love which flows out and expresses itself in action for the good of humanity. That action is true service of God. Our work will be a form of worship because we are conscious that it is done by divine will and power Divine will alone is supreme This we realise only by constantly remembering Him and keeping down the ego which makes us think that we are acting

LOVE BRINGS REMEMBRANCE

Sufi Devotee You said that if one takes the name of God for a little time during one's leisure, one will have a current of the Name running while working. But it is difficult for Europeans to do. They cannot even begin to call on the Name for quarter of an hour with concentration They will do so for one minute and for fourteen minutes they will think of something quite different and forget all about the Name.

Ramdas That is because the aspiration for God is not so very intense as is necessary Our love for other things is greater Therefore it is said that *ananya chintan* — one-pointed thought or remembrance of God beyond everything else — is required This can be possible only when our love for God is greater than for any other object in the world Then the mind will not run here and there We must pray in all humility to Him, "O God, give me one-pointed devotion for You I can remember You only when I have love for You My love is not strong enough Make it stronger so that my mind may be always fixed on You. Let Your name ring in my tongue continuously" We can get such love from contact of saints and great Teachers of the world God's grace flows into us through saints It does not fall fom the heavens Saints are the vehicles through whom grace descends from God on us Whenever your mind is uncontrollable, go and have the company of a saint At once your mind will turn to God This was Ramdas' experience, when he was trying to concentrate his mind on God Whenever he was in the company of saints, without effort his mind was repeating God's name So we must contact saintly souls, serve them,

hear their advice given for our uplift, and try to follow them In their company we taste the sweetness of the Name. When once the mind tastes this sweetness, it will cease to wander here and there

NAME IS NECTAR

We have got so many desires for worldly pleasures which are inconstant and transitory Mind becomes restless because of these attractions So we must have dispassion towards worldly pleasures and have love for the divine Name There is a song by Kabir, 'Rama Kahanaka Maja .. .' The meaning of it is, 'He who has got the sweetness of the Name on the tongue is a liberated soul.' In fact, the Name is sweeter than nectar, but we do not get the sweetness of it because we have no love for the bearer of the Name — God A man who has a certain fever is given some sugar to eat He says that it tastes bitter and throws it away When he gets well, you again give him sugar, then he says it is sweet Sugar is always sweet It does not taste sweet to him when he is sick So the Name is always sweet We do not find it sweet because our mind is diseased What is the disease? The desire for the objects of the senses Pray God to give you one-pointed devotion to Him God is immortal bliss and peace So His name is made up of bliss and peace As soon as the Name is taken, it is revealed as bliss and peace, because God and His name are not different

GOD IS NAME AND NAME IS GOD

God is Name and Name is God In that spirit let us remember the Name The moment you take the Name, at once sweetness starts Ramdas may refer to the example of lozenges If you put it in your mouth, at once sweetness starts It does not take time to give you sweetness The moment you take the Name, your entire body is permeated with joy You are in tune with Him in such a way that you lose your individual sense You are filled with divine ecstasy. This is what the Name

gives you, if you repeat it with all love and devotion The disease of the mind can be cured by the divine Master alone His grace alone can cure your malady Once you are cured of it, you taste the sweetness of the Name This joy is incomparable, the joy you get from the objects of the senses is nothing The joy the Name gives you is eternal This joy is the sun and the worldly joy is like the glow-worm The glow-worm shines in darkness, but when the sun rises the glow-worm is nowhere. So when you experience the divine joy, as you tune your mind with God, all the joys of the world pale into insignificance Will a man who always drinks nectar, go and drink gutter water? No, he will never do it This eternal nectar is God within us, and if we surrender ourselves to Him by taking His name, He will grant us the vision of seeing Him as the whole universe. Then we will have no hate, no enmity or dislike for anybody. Our life expresses itself as universal love and peace Then we are really blessed

NAME IS KALPATARU—WISH-FULFILLING TREE

This is the glorious summit of spiritual experience that can be attained by the repetition of God's name which is so simple but so powerful Name can take you to the highest pinnacle of God-realisation We have only to take refuge in the Name with all faith and devotion Pray to God for nothing else but for granting you the sweetness of the Name. The Name is the giver of everything. In the Hindu scripture, there is mention of the Kalpataru — wish-yielding tree You sit below this tree and wish for anything You will at once have your wish fulfilled The Name is a Kalpataru. You repeat the Name and whatever you wish for, you will get But do not ask for anything else but the highest realisation of the Divine Why ask for earthly things when you can get the eternal verities of life? Ask for God-realisation, and the Name will give you that. So glorious and so powerful is the Name!

Ramdas is going from place to place only to speak about the glory of the Name. If humanity only believes

in the glory of the Name, there will be no war. There will be perfect harmony and peace in the world, if God, by His grace, plants His name in the hearts of all human beings on the earth War should never take place. This must be our firm conviction, because the power of the Name we chant is so invincible.

FUSION OF WISDOM, LOVE AND ACTION

M S. · Wonderful! Europeans very often have lack of faith. They invoke the name of God and they feel nothing They forget one thing and that is confidence in God They are full of doubts, sorrow and fear. Europeans think too much. They must learn to have confidence in God They invoke very much, but surrender to Him is lacking.

Ramdas: Like a child one must surrender to God Then one attains peace and happiness Childlike surrender is necessary Intellectual gymnastics should be given up. Ramdas found in Europe people are thinking too much, but not feeling as much as they think We must open our heart They say compassion in the heart is weakness and dry intellectualism is strength. Wars are taking place because we make use of only reason, bereft of the loving influence of emotion Love has been thrust into the background at present Devotion of the heart and wisdom of the head must meet In other words, we must have an illumined intellect and a purified heart. Then will flow out pure, blissful and spontaneous action. This is what is mentioned also in the Bhagavad Gita, the great scripture of the Hindus Bhakti, Jnana and Karma are synchronised Bhakti means devotion, Jnana means knowledge and Karma means action Knowledge is of the head, devotion is of the heart and action is of the body. They must all be purified and worked in harmony with one another. This can be done when God is revealed in us. We must invoke God to manifest Himself in our heart. God is not only wisdom, but love; not only wisdom and love, but He is also the Master of action His power is supreme Mind is filled with the light of eternal wis-

dom, the light of His knowledge, heart is the repository of infinite love, and body is actuated by almighty power. This is Yoga or union with God by a fusion of the three powers of our being — mental, emotional and physical.

REASON VERSUS INTUITION

M. S: There is a great difference between the philosophy which comes from the head of man and the old traditional Hindu wisdom like that of Sri Shankara which does not come from the human source but from God. So, modern philosophies are different. European philosophy comes only from the head and the human faculty. It does not come from the Divine It ends in the human plane

Ramdas: They call it psycho-analysis Ramdas has heard about it All these things are in the mental plane. The divine plane is entirely different When God works in us, He works unerringly. He fills our mind, senses, heart and body with His light and power. This is the real thing. The great philosophers of the world, either of the East or of the West, used to draw inspiration from Him and do things. But the present day philosophers who try to understand everything by their reasoning faculty, jump into dubious conclusions These are not always correct.

Truth is a matter of experience or intuition, which is different from mere reasoning powers or logic. Reason can take us only up to a certain stage or plane and not beyond that. In the absence of intuition, reason may be all right. But some people have not even reason to guide them. Mind is their guide and they are always bungling They are doing things without caring for any baneful consequence, and they suffer Sometimes even intellect fails you in affording correct guidance. Intellect is rightly considered to be like a pair of tongs by holding which you can take anything, but cannot catch your own hand that holds it. So also the intellect, which is worked by a higher power, cannot understand what that power is. Therefore, reasoned out conclusions are anything but perfect.

Modern philosophy begins always with doubt about God and His existence The ancient wisdom begins with certainty Modern philosophy turns round in circles without getting anywhere. Europens do not contemplate with a pure intellect, which is called enlightened Buddhi

M S You have given today a great feast for us!

Ramdas We are also enjoying your company. It is glorious to meet so many of you who are all votaries of the Name We are enjoying the bliss derived from the Name Name makes one perfectly happy. We can at once know from the face of a person whether he is a votary of the Name or not. If he is, his face is lustrous with divine light and joy He is free from all worries and doubts

THE REAL 'I' IS ATMA

We generally say 'my' intellect, 'my' mind or 'my' body That shows I am not the intellect, mind or body, but am the possessor of all these things In the course of our talk we usually say 'my' body is ill, 'my' body is affected But when the body gets a sudden hit or some pain, we say, 'I got pain' That does not agree with the idea that we are not the body If I say 'my coat', I am not the coat Similarly I am not the body, but only the possessor of the body, just as I am only the wearer of the coat If you think on these lines, you will know who you really are

M S The Atma

Ramdas So it follows that when the body dies, I do not die Who am I then? I am the undying 'I'.

M. S Sat-Chit-Ananda! Man takes a rope for the snake Every man is the Truth, but he does not know it

Ramdas. That is why it is said ignorance is the cause of all misery and pain We think we are the body and therefore we are unhappy. If we know we are the supreme Spirit, the eternal Atman, we shall be free from the bondage of ignorance and enjoy eternal happiness It does not mean that even now we are not that But we do not know that It is only ignorance that makes us

think that we are individuals. But when knowledge dawns we shall be awakened to the consciousness of the divine existence. We have nothing new to attain. We have only to become aware of what we really are. For instance, suppose some particle of dust falls into our eyes. We feel great discomfort We go to the doctor and explain to him that there is some irritation felt in the eyes. The doctor looks into the eyes and removes the particle of dust and as soon as it is removed, we are happy again as before. Is it any happiness that we have newly gained? It is only the restoration of what we had lost temporarily This foreign matter in the eyes was responsible for the loss of the happiness which we had When it was removed, we got the happiness back. So, ignorance has come between us and God and made us think that we are not He. When the ignorance is removed we realise our true nature. This is how the great mystics realised God is ever dwelling within us God is pervading everywhere We should become conscious of Him, conscious that we are ever one with Him.

MAHARSHI - 'WHO AM I'

M. S : It has been very well said by Sri Ramana Maharashi to find out 'Who am I'

Ramdas That means the 'I' which we ordinarily speak of does not exist. If we search for this 'I' and trace its origin, we find that it is not at all there The example is given of an onion. In search of the seed of the onion, we go on removing layers and layers of it, till we remove all the layers and find there are but layers and no seed. So, search for the 'I', and you will find the 'I' does not exist. The Maharshi's way of approaching the Truth is through the enquiry, 'Who am I?' You try to find it and it is not there at all What do you find then? The all-pervading Reality The mind that goes in search of the 'I', not finding it, loses itself in the all-pervading Truth. If anybody went to the Maharshi and put him any question, he at once asked him to find out who was the quest'oner, who that 'I' was, before he anwered the

question The questioner went and never returned because he was busy finding out the 'I'

LET NAME POSSESS YOU

In the same way, by repeating God's name, the mind goes within, settles down and loses itself in the divine Being We at once realise that we are not the body, we are not an individual, and we are not the ego, but the Atman, the all-pervading, ever-existent universal Spirit or Truth. That is how we get the knowledge of the Truth through the power of the Name

M S When we possess the Name, the Name does everything for us

Ramdas Yes It does everything It is not that we have to catch hold of the Name The Name has to catch us. If this is done we are safe We are vainly trying to catch it In the Bhagavad Gita there is the Sloka:

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि माशुचः ॥

'Abandoning all duties come to Me alone for shelter, grieve not, and I will liberate you from all sins' These are the words of Lord Krishna They teach the path of surrender. We must dedicate ourselves to God completely so that the Name can take hold of us We will then never forget God's name That is Grace Thirty-three years ago when Ramdas was living the ordinary worldly life, suddenly God caught hold of him If Ramdas had tried to catch Him, he would not have got Him As Tulsidas in one of his songs says, "O God! Say to me once, 'You are Mine'" So He must say 'You are Mine' to us Then we are saved

WHEN YOU SINCERELY ASPIRE FOR SATSANG, YOU GET IT

Ramdas. It is all joy to meet saints Wherever there is a saint, Ramdas rushes to meet him and talk to him Even in India, wherever he travels, he goes to meet saints.

M S In Europe we have very few opportunities for Satsang.

Ramdas. Satsang is the first thing necessary for the man who follows the spiritual path It is very important. Without it no spiritual evolution is possible.

A Sufi Devotee: It is so difficult for Europeans There are many who wish to meet a saint and get the Name from him. But they cannot find one. Their position is tragic. It is useless for us then to aspire to invoke the Name.

Ramdas The Name can give you anything you want. If you have faith in the Name, it will bring you in contact with a saint. You need not go in search of him If only your aspiration is sincere and true, saints will come to your place, or God will take you to their place. Is not your experience like that?

ALL ABOUT THE NAME OF GOD

A Sufi Devotee: The Name, I hope, should be appropriate to one's religion.

Ramdas. It should be according to one's liking. It must be one's Ishta. Even a Christian may call God by any name he chooses, in his own religion. There is a tank in which there are steps on all the four sides. Four men got down through the four different sides and touched the water. One said it was 'jal', another said it was 'water', the third said it was 'pani', and the last said it was 'udak'. Though each one gave a different name, all the names were synonyms of water. We may similarly call God as Jesus, Allah, Rama or Krishna or by any other name; it represents the same Truth

M. S.: In the beginning the Name is hidden in the man. Afterwards the man is hidden in the Name. The Name is everywhere Man is only a small point in the Name.

A Devotee How long was it that you had searched before He took hold of you?

Ramdas. When He took hold of Ramdas, the search had ended

Devotee: Was it a long search?

Ramdas. No, it was not long, but it was a frantic

search Ramdas was held by Him and even now he is in His arms — like a child in the arms of the mother Now, no separation is possible, and there is no occasion for it because God has held the child Before that Ramdas was restless, and now the restlessness has ceased When he was repeating the Name, he felt God Himself was making him repeat the Name, because in the repetition there was joy. It was not done in order to get joy at some future time The moment he repeated the Name, he was enjoying supreme bliss That is the secret If you think you are repeating the Name, by your own will and power, you will not get anything out of it You get joy when you feel He is making you do so If you think you are repeating it, you will be proud Therefore a saint has said, 'First surrender yourself to God and then take His name.' Then the Name will be with you always and it will give you unending bliss and peace Here surrender means the awareness, 'It is not my will, but it is by Your will that I am repeating Your name' Verily, we remember God because God remembered us first Otherwise we would never have remembered Him. His grace it is that makes us search for Him If we have faith in this process, we shall have no reason to complain that His name does not taste sweet

LOVE IS THE RHYTHM OF THE NAME

A Devotee Do you always repeat the Name in the same rhythm?

Ramdas What is most important is that we should have love Rhythm may be necessary, but love is what counts. The child would call the mother in any way, but it does so with all love and affection The mother runs to the child All depends upon the feeling when uttering the Name Our heart should be full of devotion and longing for Him Then alone He responds. We must have the [illegible] of longing and the rhythm of love We must p[illegible] [illegible]rt and soul in the call means [illegible] One who is within us, me Yo[illegible] I am calling You so

come out and manifest Yourself and make me aware of Your presence, and fill me with Your power and wisdom, and make me behold You everywhere' This is the purpose with which we are repeating the Name. If we take the name of God and think of Him constantly, we will become one with Him As a man thinketh, so he becometh So, if we think of God always, we will become God.

M. S Swami Ramdas is like the Ganges that never gets dry or tired

Ramdas When we are talking about God, we do not live in time We live in the Timeless. That is why we feel happy. When we transcend time and space, we are happy Meditation on God will take you beyond time and space. You will be merged in the universal Presence which is eternal, which is God How can you then be unhappy? When you come down to time, you begin to adjust your affairs and make plans. We are now going to adjust our programmes! Will you kindly permit us to go?

LONDON,

1st October, 1954.

Speech at the Indian Students' Bureau, London.

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is not going to tire you with a long speech because he is not a speech-maker himself He has been sent from India, as the previous speaker told you, by the will of God, to propagate the ideal of universal love and service We are so much absorbed in the day to day activities, that we are ignoring the spritual values of life It is essential that we should not lose ourselves in such activities and forget the source from which our life has come.

We think we are what we appear to be, mere bodies But there is the eternal Spirit in us of which we should be conscious, before we can so order our life as to attain true happiness, and thereby bring harmony in the world As it is, we find discord and dissension along with confusion of ideas, aims and aspirations. This is due to the fact that we have forgotten the supreme glory of the Truth that dwells within us. As we come to recognise this Truth and as we more and more become conscious of It, we feel that we are not merely the bodies, but the supreme undying Spirit which pervades everywhere and unites all beings into one family as children of one God This is the way how we can live in mutual harmony and peace This is the message which is very much needed in the present day world.

THE ART OF LIVING

This art of living can be practised only when we turn our minds inward for some time at least during the twenty-four hours of the day, and find that there is in us a Truth that binds us all together in mutual fellowship and goodwill The Spirit is the Truth that pervades everywhere, out of which this vast universal manifestation has

emanated. If we understand and realise this, we shall attain true happiness and impart the same to others by our contact, because then our selfishness will have left us and we shall develop love for our fellow-beings based on the knowledge of the indwelling Spirit. Many efforts are made in the world to bring about unity and harmony. But they have so far failed because their efforts are superficial and not founded on the underlying Reality.

Man's quest is happiness. Happiness cannot be got by procuring so many things of the world that cater to our senses. This we have realised after striving hard for years and years. It can be found only when we turn our mind inward and find the source of eternal joy and peace within ourselves. That source is God. So God-remembrance, meditation on God, is the way by which we can get control over our minds and learn to live in peace and happiness, in perfect contentment. Without contentment there cannot be peace. The worldly things give us only momentary happiness. We are ever discontented. Suppose a man has earned one lakh of rupees. He is not satisfied. He wants two lakhs. When he gets two lakhs he wants four. So his desire also goes on growing as his wealth increases. He does not find any satisfaction. True satisfaction is got only when we tune our mind with that eternal joy within us. So, Ramdas' message to all is that they should turn the mind for a short period every day, so that they can live in the consciousness of the Spirit, by which alone man can attain real freedom and real joy.

God has been defined in the Hindu scriptures as Satchidananda, Absolute Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. That is the Truth about which Ramdas talked to you. As we tune our mind more and more with It, we shall get the happiness we are in quest of.

We all want harmony, whether we belong to the East or the West. We can have that harmony and the consequent peace and happiness by loving each other, taking ourselves to be the children of one divine parent who dwells

in each one of us God is not one to be imagined as dwelling far away from us. He is the indwelling Spirit of every one of us By constantly thinking about Him, praying to Him, singing His glories, we get awakened to the consciousness of Him, and our life becomes utterly blessed.

MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND.

2nd October, 1954

Talk with Monsieur Schuon at Jayaram House, Hayes End.

M S. : When I was young I searched for a Master and I heard of a great Sufi saint in North Africa I had no money to go there But soon God helped me to find a way and I went from France to North Africa. I went to the Ashram of the saint and asked the door-keeper if I could see the saint He said he would go and ascertain In a few minutes he returned and permitted me to see the saint I stayed there for three months. I spent my time there in meditation with my Master. I went back to France. About a year later, suddenly, one day the Name took hold of me. For two days I could do nothing but say 'Allah, Allah'. Later I heard that just at that time the Master was dying in N. Africa I went back to N. Africa and visited the tomb of the Master.

It is the practice among the Sufis that the Master shuts his disciple in a dark room and the disciple stays there for several days where he does nothing but to call on the Name He eats once a day at sunset

May be, one day I can come to India I am not sure at all.

Ramdas : When God wills, you will surely come We shall be so happy to have you there.

RAMDAS' REMINISCENCES

M S . I wish to know where the Ashram of Swami Ramdas is

Ramdas : It is near Mangalore in the South of India It is a spot two and a half miles away from the town of Kanhangad, surrounded by hills Ramdas was repeating God's name because he had lost attraction for the world and he wanted to see God, realise God So with great intensity he was repeating God's name day and night, at the same time attending to his work One day his father came to him and asked what he was repeating.

When Ramdas told him that he was repeating 'Ram, Ram'. he said he would give him a Mantra, and gave 'Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram' This was thirty-three years ago After this initiation Ramdas was repeating this Guru Mantra Later, God within him became his Guru Ramdas lost contact with his human Guru. He left the place and wandered all over India, with only one piece of cloth and no money He lived on alms God caught hold of him from within and from without.

One day, when Ramdas got down in Ajmer station, a Muslim came and called him In those days Ramdas would go with anybody who called him So the Muslim friend took him to a place called Khaja Pir, a big tomb built over the remains of a great Muslim saint, and said, "Kneel down here. You have to become the disciple of Mohammad" Ramdas replied, "Ramdas is already a disciple of Mohammed" "Then all right, you may go", said the friend

Sometimes Ramdas was asked to go to solitudes He would go and remain in caves, taking God's name the whole day and night He liked the caves very much and so the hills He used to remain there for days together.

M S. I had just been to Spanish Morocco to visit the tomb of a Negro saint This saint sat on the top of a mountain and never spoke to anybody. His was a very simple life, sitting down in one place and invoking God's name He died there itself.

HOW TO GAIN CONFIDENCE IN GOD

A Sufi Devotee. How can we attain that complete confidence in God?

Ramdas By the grace of the Guru There is no other way. God alone must give us that confidence His grace alone can do it We cannot acquire it by our own effort. If there is any effort on our part, it is only to go and meet the Guru, and open our heart to receive his light and grace. Then that confidence and faith will be created in us. Otherwise not. Before that, we are

always full of doubts and our trust in God is not steady. It comes and goes It can be established only by the Guru's grace If you want to receive his grace, you must go to him with the windows of your heart open, i e, you must go to him in all humility, without questioning Then you will get his grace and your heart will be filled with the power of the Name, the power of God Thereafter you will take the Name, invoke the Name with all faith, with unshaken faith, for, the grace is working in you

Faith is a wonderful thing A certain spiritually illumined soul was sitting, with many friends about him, talking of God Suddenly, a man stricken with deep sorrow, who wanted to know God, happened to pass that way Seeing the Master and disciples sitting there, he approached them and said, "I am utterly miserable I want to know God, I want to see God" At that time the Master was telling some story to the disciples and he had just said the word 'pestle' The Master told him, "Go on repeating 'pestle, pestle'" The man took that word with all faith He thought that must be the word of God He went on repeating the word day and night He got inner illumination by that power. It is said that from heaven a golden pestle came and took him to heaven because of his faith in the Name Whatever it was, he took it for God's name By the wonderful power of his faith he could go to heaven.

VALMIKI'S STORY

Valmiki was a robber. Once a saint was passing through the place where Valmiki lived The robber fell upon the saint and wanted to wrest from him the musical instrument which he was having The saint told the robber what a great sin he was committing by robbery The robber said, "I am doing it only to feed my family. What I earn this way is not for me alone I have my wife and children" The saint said, "Will you go and ask your wife and children if they would share the sin you are committing?" The robber agreed, went to his house and told his wife and children "A saint who is passing this

way has asked me to enquire if you are prepared to share the sins of my robbery, which I do only to feed you all" They replied, "We cannot share your sins How you get the money for our expenses is not our concern" The robber came back to the saint, prostrated before him and said, "I do not want to commit sins any more." Then the saint, Narada, asked him to chant the Name 'Rama'. The robber could not repeat the Name properly. He was repeating it in the opposite way as 'Mara, Mara.' He gave up his worldly life, went to solitude and devoted all the time for the repetition of the Name His austerities were so severe that he sat in one place for many years with the result that his body was covered by anthill. He had faith in the words of the Master who said, "If you repeat this Name you will be saved" So he became a great saint Doubts should not cross our mind. Doubts are our worst enemies Swami Ramatirtha has said, 'Instead of having a doubt in your heart, it is better to have a dagger there.'

SRI RAMANUJACHARYA

Ramdas remembers one instance in Sri Ramanujacharya's life You must have heard of the three great Teachers — Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa They have established their systems of philosophy in India. Ramanuja went to a Master and requested him to initiate him. The Master gave him God's name and also advised him not to tell this Name to anybody, adding that if he did so he would go to hell At once Ramanuja went up to the top of the local temple and shouted, 'I am going to give you all a Name which will save you. My Master has given me that Name' He uttered the Name also loudly so that everybody could hear. The Master heard about it and asked why he did so in spite of his warning. Ramanuja's reply was, "I am prepared to go to hell a hundred times if I can save thousands"

BURTON-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND,

3rd October, 1954

Speech at the residence of Mr. Stephan Sheppard

Beloved Friends, — We are all in search of eternal peace and joy, i.e., the eternal Kingdom of Heaven. This is our quest. After realising that supreme state, we become truly free and happy. The divine forces that do good to humanity are hidden in us. They manifest in us when we are in communion with the Divine. We are mistaken in thinking that Heaven is far away from us. Jesus has categorically told us that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. In that Heaven God dwells. So He is dwelling within us. If we are conscious of this Truth, we can always be happy, free and cheerful. All our powers revealed through union with the Divine can be utilised for the uplift of others in every way. So what we have to do is to pray to God and meditate on Him.

THE FIRST THING WE HAVE TO KNOW

God is seated in our heart. This is the first thing we have to know, the first thing we must believe in. When we do that, the next step is easy. If we feel He is far away from us, we do not derive much benefit by meditating on Him. If we feel that He is within us, and pray to Him in the sanctum of our heart, then we can draw from Him light, grace, power and peace. When we pray to Him, let us shut our eyes and visualise Him as seated in our heart. Then the prayer will be soon heard. If we think He is far away from us, we may doubt whether our prayer reaches Him. It is easy to commune with Him in the heart, to pray to Him and surrender to Him. By resigning ourselves to His will, we release that divine force within us which contributes to our happiness and to the happiness of others. When we are conscious of this, we truly love our fellow beings, and by that love we shed on them light, peace and joy. Our life too becomes blessed that way.

This is not merely a mental exercise, but tuning of our mind with the Divine within us through constant remembrance and meditation For this Ramdas found that the chanting of the Divine name was the easiest way. Many people think that the Divine name cannot do anything If we take the name of God with all faith and devotion we shall find that the mind which is so restless becomes perfectly at peace When the mind is peaceful and still, we realise the existence of God within us We doubt His very existence because our mind is restless. Our mind is full of outgoing tendencies It is wishing and making plans all day So we do not feel God within us, just as in moving and disturbed water we cannot see the reflection of our face As soon as the water becomes still and waves have stopped, we can see the reflection clearly So also the mind has to be purified and made still by constant remembrance of God through the utterance of His name, before we can feel His presence. His name is all-powerful.

WORK SHOULD BE DONE IN PLAYFUL SPIRIT

Work must be done without any strain It must flow out of you spontaneously, in perfect cheerfulness. You are all living in the country, and it must be easy for you to dedicate what you do to the Lord by constant remembrance of Him, and thus make your life blissful. Now work is done like play. The ego is absent You feel you are a child of God God is your father and mother. He is the master and you are the servant He is seated within you and is making you do everything. In that state you enjoy ineffable peace This is the state we have to attain in this life

THE HEART BLOSSOMS LIKE THE LOTUS

The soul is immortal and is one with God. This oneness can be realised by always thinking of Him and singing His greatness and glory. When the heart blossoms like a flower, it gives out the fragrance of love and peace divine. There is the lotus flower. When it is a bud you

do not see its inner beauty When the sun rises it blossoms The light of the sun causes the petals to open and the fragrance and beauty of the flower are revealed in all grandeur. So also our heart which is like a flower opens when the light of God or divine grace shines on it We must pray to the Divine to pour His grace on us so that our heart may blossom and reveal its inner beauty of love and compassion.

Prayer is the means to bring about contact of the soul with the Oversoul, the highest power within us. He is omnipresent, as such He is present in our hearts too When we think of Him constantly, we do feel His presence. This is called practising the presence of God. We can raise our mind to that supreme state wherein with our eyes we can see Him, and with our hands touch Him. He is more real than the things we see around us. But for Him we would not have been able to walk, talk or do anything. We think we are doing everything by our own power If we only become conscious that by His will and power only we are doing everything, we shall never do wrong. We do wrong because we are unaware of Him.

LIVE FOR HUMANITY

As we give love to others, our store of love increases Love is not like material wealth As you give, it goes on increasing You are happy yourself and you make others happy People think that in their pursuit of happiness it is permissible to cause grief to others That is not the way. Lord Buddha, the great spiritual Teacher who was born in India before Jesus Christ, says, 'Rejoice in the good fortune of others Give love for hate' He lived such a life He loved those who hated him and thus transformed them.

We must be pure in thought, word and deed Then only we can be really helpful to others We understand a Chapel is going to be built here It will be a blessed thing for you all to go there and sit silent and serene with your mind perfectly still. After prayers and repeti-

tion of God's name, you will see that the body-idea disappears and you are filled with divine radiance and grace In that state, God's power will work through you. You can work wonders in elevating others, relieving the distress of others and bringing peace, happiness, health and every kind of good to others This is quite possible

Our life is not to be lived only for us, but for the humanity as a whole That is why this precious human life is granted to us by God God has gifted us with intelligence and His power can work through us If we live such a life, then only we shall not have lived in vain. Therefore among the Hindus it is believed that this human body is given to us in order to realise Him, feel His presence always This body is not meant to enjoy the pleasures of the senses This is done by animals. If we live only for such pleasures, we are in no way better than animals. We are human beings and we can rise from the human to the divine plane We can realise the Divine in this very life

LOVE - THE UNIVERSAL GOSPEL

Ramdas has been speaking very long. He has said all that he has to say. Still if you want to ask any questions, he is prepared to answer you in the light of his experience He feels God's presence all the hours of the day and night, and he has come to you with the authority God has given him to talk to you He would not have talked to you of God, if he himself has not found Him. God's grace has come to him and it has made him so blissful. He wants to share that joy with you all

God is dear to us. He is the only dear one to us. Others do not come with us We have to leave them behind and go away The Divine is our only eternal companion If we trust Him, He will never forsake us. He will guide and protect us and inspire us to do the right thing, and in every way take care of us Such a loving Master and Mother we cannot afford to forget. Let us think of Him constantly, live, move and have our being in Him. He is all-pervading He is eternal Exist-

ence, Consciousness and Bliss — Satchidananda. The Bible declares, "God is love. He who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God dwelleth in him." So also in all the other scriptures God is defined as love. If we realise this love in our heart, how blessed we shall become!

Based on this attainment, Jesus said, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' Verily, in Spirit we are all one. He dwells in the hearts of all of us. In the light of this knowledge, we cannot but love all alike Now all our petty jealousies and anger will vanish completely. We shall be kind, compassionate and loving A saint has said, 'God dwells in that heart wherein compassion, forgiveness and kindness reside' We must develop these virtues This is possible only by His grace. When we do not know how to control the mind, we must call upon God to give us strength. Prayer is the way to battle against so many desires which we cannot control If they are not controlled, we shall act wrongly, for which we shall afterwards repent. Repentance comes to us only too late. We cannot take back the words already spoken or the actions already done by us. So our understanding must be imbued with divine inspiration That is possible only when we commune with God, keep our mind in tune with Him by constant remembrance, meditation and prayer. Let us try to remember Him all day and night Some people think their work will suffer if they remember Him That is not the case. The undercurrent of God-remembrance will go on even when we are at work. We develop a consciousness or awareness of God which is maintained at all hours, even when we are working But in the early stages it is not easy to keep it up There is a struggle But gradually it becomes possible, if during our off hours, when we have leisure, we think of Him Those who work with their hands take His name with the tongue, and attune themselves with God. Then work becomes worship. Work is devotion to God just as prayer.

EXAMPLE OF ANANDASHRAM

When Ramdas is telling you all these things, you

should not be under the impression that he is not doing any work in the Ashram We have our prayer time there. We have our way of taking God's name We have also an elementary school for poor children We have work in the fields for raising some crops We have also to look after our fruit garden. We have a dairy where there are sixty cows. All these activities we are carrying on and still we feel we are one with our Divine Master He is always with us and everywhere about us

Mother Krishnabai, who is here with us, is working all the day, from early morning till 10 o'clock at night She works in the kitchen, fields, cowshed and all other places. She does not merely supervise, but she does work with her own hands She does not see any difference between master and servant It is a community life that we are leading Each one is given some work and he does it cheerfully, as it is done for the sake of God Philosophy should not make us idle Idleness is not the way. Pray when you have to pray Work when you have to work Work also then becomes prayer. When, you do work in His name, it becomes holy work, consecreated work Ramdas seems to be carrying coals to Newcastle You are all doing work here harmoniously, in a simple and unsophisticated manner, having firm faith in God. Still, as our friend wanted Ramdas to come here and talk to you, he does so Moreover, however much we are in tune with God, to hear about Him is added joy to us Ramdas has come from a far off place to talk to you about God, and you like to hear him

Mr McSweeney It is not carrying coals to Newcastle

Ramdas That shows how loving you are. Your heart is already full of that love which Ramdas has been talking about all along.

McSweeney: The trouble is that we do not want to lose you now. It has been a glorious hour.

Ramdas Ramdas finds groups of people eager to hear him talk about God's name and dedicated work. What a heartening thing it is to feel He is within us! We

might be thinking that He is far away. One day we have to open our inner eye and see Him within us

ON HEALING

McSweeney We are interested a lot in healing. What is the great difference between Pranic healing and Divine healing?

Ramdas Divine healing is the correct thing When you are in tune with God and your mind is still and concentrated, a divine force is released in you and it is that power that heals In Ramdas' case such things are happening, although he is not consciously doing it. He is made to do certain unusual things at which he himself is surprised. Once, in his wandering life, when he was resting in the verandah of a house in a small village, a man suddenly came running and asked Ramdas to go with him The man said, "There is a lady who is very ill. Please bless her so that she may be healed" Ramdas never knew anything about healing by spiritual power. In those days he was docile and went with anybody who called him He sat near the patient and was asked to pass his hand over her. Ramdas did so She was running about 105 degrees temperature After that, Ramdas went back to the place where he was resting Within five minutes the same man came and said the temperature of the patient had come to normal. Many such things have happened in his life Ramdas says it is not his power that did it, but God's power. He is only an instrument through which God's power works God did the healing.

Then, another friend who wished to purchase a Derby ticket wanted Ramdas to tell him what number would win. Ramdas said that he did not know He wanted Ramdas to ask God. Ramdas said, 'Nothing doing'

Your aim must be to realise Him and feel your union with Him Let not healing be the objective Merely healing means, you stop your progress with that If instead of conserving your spiritual power for attaining the goal you lose it in these practices, you will achieve nothing in the end. But if you keep your battery charged every day,

you can march onward on the divine path The battery is charged by continuous thought of God. When you have seen God, you can not only heal people of their illnesses, but also *awaken them to the consciousness of God* Your main aim should be to keep your mind attuned to God. Let His power work through you in whatever way He wills Your presence itself must be so dynamic that those who come near you must not only be healed of their physical ailments, but also be awakened to the Divine.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEW YORK,

7th October, 1954

Talks with Dr Alexander Imich, at Prince George Hotel.

Dr Imich Swami, I know you are helping those who have already faith in God But what about those who have no faith in Him? How are you going to create in them faith in God? You should be able to make the unbelievers believe in Him. I am not satisfied with your merely helping those who are already on the path You must awaken thousands

Ramdas. If God's will is that Ramdas should be made an instrument for awakening people in thousands, he will submit to it Ramdas is only a humble servant doing the duty God has given him Sometimes things, that we do not think of, happen Nothing is impossible for God Ramdas is at all times in tune with God His will be done

Ramdas feels so familiar with you There is a spiritual kinship between you and him because you are for him the very embodiment of God Books are nothing. Mere talking also is of no avail Living the real life is everything We must live with a person who has realised God and study what it is to live in God

HOW TO MAKE UNBELIEVERS BELIEVE IN GOD

Dr. Imich. We do not know what God wishes. We must try to do what is best We would like to organise something, so that all may have the benefit of hearing you May be, Swami Ramdas will speak and create an impression not only upon a few friends who are on the spiritual path, but on the whole population

Ramdas You have now a few minutes' talk with Ramdas. Do you think that a contact with a large number of people will produce the result aimed at?

Dr Imich I do not think, so far as unbelievers are concerned They cannot believe you American boys and girls, ah !

Ramdas. Do you think they will take seriously Ramdas' words, unless there is some power behind the words? There must be some power Then only it is possible Do you think Ramdas will be able to induce that power and make them change?

Dr. Imich It is quite possible I think there is another way of making them believe Proof of God-realisation must be given to them They say, "May be he is merely thinking, or he is having a hallucination"

Ramdas: Until one gets that experience, it is quite natural that one should doubt it Seeing is believing Unless they see they cannot believe

FAITH BASED ON MIRACLES IS NO GOOD

Dr. Imich. What about miracles? If miracles are performed they might believe

Ramdas Faith based upon miracles will not last long Before three or four thousand people, Jesus performed miracles, and ultimately twelve men alone believed in him, and even out of that twelve so many denied him. Inner opening to a spiritual experience is what is needed and not merely a spectacular miracle which produces no permanent result

Dr. Imich I have the answer for that. It is not so You see, may be, the Westerner has his own way to approach the Spirit world. He cannot jump away from the intellectual way He must go intellectually and must come to the conviction that matter or energy is not all, that there is the Spirit This can be done by showing the scientist a miracle Once the proof is given to him, he cannot say God does not exist A great scientist like Einstien speaks of God He has intelligence. But how can he speak of God? He has not realised God He at once makes a jump, but he has no right to speak of God. Many scientists think that God must be beyond matter and energy.

Ramdas. When Einstien declared that he believed in God, many people of his own rank were not prepared to hear him

SCIENTISTS' DIFFICULTY

Dr Imich. It is not the personal conviction of Einstien that matters. Scientifically it must be proved that God exists. Scientists do not believe in the past miracles of which there is no proof, as no records were made of them and no films were taken. Without proof you cannot expect the West to turn from the ways of the intellect to God A few dozen people may believe and will be very pleased to meet the Swami from India That is not enough I want Ramdas to make thousands believe in God Or we must come to the conviction that the spiritual progress of humanity cannot be speeded up. If you tell me that people will turn to the spiritual way in another 1000 years, I am not satisfied with that.

Ramdas You have put your case very nicely and frankly. Ramdas likes it very much You have made out a very good case for the scientists

Dr Imich · I am very glad.

Ramdas: It is true, people who are very intellectual have come to disbelieve in the existence of God Even the so-called believers are not really believing They are still assailed by doubts. They also sometimes think if this is not a hallucination after all This is the position of the so-called believers. They stumble upon the Reality after some wonderful experience and admit that there is God and He is the Reality. But it is not anything to be shown like a magic

Dr Imich. It should not, however, be a mere matter of personal experience It should be objective like science It should come to all. It should come to the whole world It must be brought within the reach of every one

Ramdas: That is what Ramdas is striving to do. He wants to tell everybody that God can be realised in this life. That is his mission That is why he has come all the way from India We have been in the plane for

22 hours from London At this age, why should Ramdas go all the world over? It is only to spread the great message of God and His name, to impress on every one that God can be attained by taking His name Ramdas is doing only what God asks him to do

Dr Imich Did you enjoy the flight?

Ramdas: Ramdas takes every situation in which God places him as good He is happy always

Dr Imich. May I ask you for some personal advice? You know what I am I have no personal experience. I do not make any spiritual progress

Ramdas Ramdas is giving everything that he can possibly give you in a spiritual way, that is, by loving you Love is the way by which he is pouring out his heart to you, so that your heart may be awakened and may be full of peace May God grant you that peace in your heart!

LOVE IS THE ONLY MIRACLE

Dr Imich You are a good person People love you

Ramdas. Everywhere Ramdas went, people loved him

Dr. Imich Could you live in America and live the same person? It is so difficult Life is not easy in this country. People are different here

Ramdas. We get so many visitors in our Ashram. They stay with us for one or two months They move freely with us because the Ashram does not observe caste, creed or other distinctions All are like brothers and sisters to us They also go to various places in India and come in contact with many saints Contact with a saint is what we consider to be an essential thing Reading books won't do Contact with a saint alone can grant the experience of the higher life It is with this purpose this child of God is moving about So many who have come in contact with Ramdas have felt enlightened We have so many letters from friends who got spiritual experiences by coming in contact with Ramdas Ramdas also

felt so much peace in their company, because love is the most important thing in our life If we get that love our life becomes blessed. Love is God Jesus rightly said, 'God is love' It is not a mere imaginary thing To love them is the only miracle that we can show to others, not the miracle of doing something which is forgotten afterwards

Dr Imich But scientists want something like that

Ramdas: Are you also a scientist?

Dr Imich Yes I am interested in science

Ramdas We are also interested in science. But science should be used for constructive purposes, not for destructive purposes If it can help humanity in any way, let it be used When we all join together in love, then science will be of great use to humanity It is, no doubt, doing something useful now, but it must be made to do more on the basis of love Man must shed his selfishness and be truly good to humanity You have heard the teaching, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' Rabindranath Tagore was asked how one can love another as oneself when the two are different altogether He said that according to the Hindu philosophy the Self in you and another are one So on the basis of the Self you can love your neighbour as yourself

Dr Imich I must be going now. I derived very great pleasure from this meeting, not merely pleasure, but something more precious than that Perhaps I shall be able to better appreciate it afterwards

NEW YORK,

9th October, 1954

At the residence of Miss Elizabeth Achelis

PRACTISING GOD'S PRESENCE

Questioner . How can we become established in the experience of God, how can we keep up the link for twenty-four hours of the day ?

Ramdas . You can by practice keep up Divine consciousness for all the twenty-four hours Ramdas can tell you this from his own experience He was awakened to the supreme purpose of his life thirty-three years ago This was to realise God He was struggling for some time to remain in that consciousness at all times God by His grace gave him constant remembrance of Him, by the incessant repetition of His holy name, which means he was able to tune himself with God day and night. He came to experience the Divine presence and a peace that passeth all understanding You must persist in maintaining this consciousness Every day you must try for this attainment This consciousness and peace will be with you even when you are active in the world Then that will be a permanent background in your life and will remain in you like an undercurrent This is what is called the presence of God

Q What do you say about the technique for feeling the presence of God always ?

Ramdas When you sit silently and strive to dissolve all thoughts, you find it very difficult Some thoughts come and go So it is better to have one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts Let this thought be the symbol of God And after some time, when you are in a position to keep this thought alone in the mind, you must try to dissolve that also When that thought too is dissolved, your mind is perfectly calm and free from all thoughts.

Sit silent and watch the mind Know that names and forms have to be transcended. Surrender yourself to the

eternal Spirit dwelling within you Then you will be able to realise the presence of God always

TIME AND SPACE ARE ONLY CONCEPTUAL

Q What about time and space?

Ramdas. If we meditate on God as the absolute Truth, we take Him to be the supreme Reality transcending time, space and causation. We live in time when we live in the relative plane of life. In the Absolute there is neither time nor space. The division of time as past, present and future is merely conceptual Yesterday was today and tomorrow will be today Nobody saw yesterday and nobody will see tomorrow. So the time factor seems to belong only to the mental plane which has no meaning in the absolute existence. Time can be transcended by stilling the mind So also, space and causation

BEGINNER SHOULD START WITH THE MANIFEST

Q: To a beginner, do you suggest he should start from the Unmanifest?

Ramdas: It is better to start with the Manifest

Q I had some experience of the Unmanifest and I find it easier to concentrate on that.

Ramdas: If you have already some experience of the Unmanifest, it is all right your trying to contemplate on it, but those who have had no such experience must start with the Manifest. Repeat the name of God and when the mind becomes still, you will be taken above all names and forms For those who possess a restless mind, Name is a great help.

ST PAUL, MINNESOTA, U S A,

14th October, 1954

Speech at the residence of Mr J R Raymer, Jr, 316 Stonebridge Blvd, St. Paul 5

Beloved Friends, — Ramdas is a child of God and as such he introduces himself to you You are all his dear friends, the very forms of his eternal Beloved, whom he has found in his heart In your company he feels quite at home He does not feel that he is in the midst of strangers. You seem to be known to him from time immemorial, because our relationship is not merely physical, but is of the eternal Spirit that dwells in the hearts of every one of us In the light of that knowledge and experience, he lays before you an account of his spiritual life from the time it started in 1921 That time onwards God has taken him up and made him His own He is at present imbued with the light, power and joy of that supreme being who is his Beloved, as well as of you all, because He is seated in the hearts of all Such a one has taken Ramdas up and has absorbed him into His splendrous Being Ramdas feels His presence every moment of his life After granting this experience, it was His will that he should leave India and wander over the whole globe and come in contact with friends, so that he can talk to them about God, and thus enjoy himself and also give joy to them

HOW WE BECOME LIKE HIM

We are all here in this world to have that joy and peace that passeth all understanding, as described in the New Testament [illegible]at peace that we have to achi[illegible] in this life It [illegible] only when we keep o[illegible] always thinkin[illegible] [illegible]ing, meditating on ou[illegible] Beloved If [illegible] [illegible]ntinuously, without [illegible] we will be [illegible] and He will surely [illegible] us His grace [illegible] [illegible]us into His lik[illegible]

YOU AND HE ARE ONE

Jesus has said, 'I and my Father are one' The subject on which Ramdas has been asked to speak today is 'You and He are one'. This great privilege God has given us as human beings Some people may be startled when we tell them that God and they are one They think we are puny, erring mortals How can we expect to be one with the Divine Being! This is possible when our being is purged of all its low passions and is enlightened fully by His will, power and wisdom We can be like Him We can raise ourselves to the same status to which Jesus wants us to elevate ourselves In the olden days, those who asserted that they were one with God, were not liked by people Even Jesus, when he declared that he and his Father were one, was not looked upon with favour by people who ultimately crucified him. He said definitely that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us. That means God dwells within us, because God is where the Kingdom of Heaven is Verily, heart is the throne in which He is seated. If we are conscious of Him constantly, we can make the Divine within us reveal Himself and fill us through and through in all parts of our being and radiate joy and light to everybody with whom we come in contact

LET US BE LIKE CHILDREN

This is the purpose for which God has given this life to us We see life around us in animals, but animals are not gifted with the power and capacity to understand the ways of God, submit to the will of God and make God the sole object and aim of life, so that God may reveal Himself in their heart and transform them into His very image. God can make us into His own image. But we have forgotten Him, and the result is that we have come to grief If we remember God and feel His presence, we can make our life simply sublime The one thing required is complete resignation to the Divine will. When that is done, His grace flows into us and we become His true children — children in the sense in which Jesus said,

"Unless we become like children, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven." We become so pure, so innocent, so spontaneous like children in all that we do. We live like a flower that gives its fragrance to everybody. Its very nature is to emit fragrance. So our life will be a spontaneous outflow of peace and love that we have gained by submitting to His will Because, by submitting to His will, the ego will be wiped out.

You may be surprised why Ramdas is speaking in the third person Ramdas does not say 'I' Somehow, thirty-three years ago, this 'I' was taken away by God One morning he found he could never utter 'I'. 'Ramdas' is the name given to him by God. 'Ramdas' means servant of God He has become His humble servant As such he is going from place to place, spreading His name, asking everybody to remember Him so that their mind may be purged of all impurities and they can feel the presence of the Divine within them

Before Ramdas started this speech, friends had advised him that he should speak slowly, but when he started talking, he could not control himself He went on at high speed and that has produced the dryness of the throat which is an obstacle You will kindly excuse him for this You will, of course, excuse him because you are like mothers to him.

He does not see any distinction between North, South, East and West. He sees the whole universe as his home He is moving about in the universe as from one room to another. It is his Father-Mother's home in which the child freely goes about and loves everybody, because all who live in that home are the children of that Father-Mother—God. This seems to be a wonderful thing.

A PARADOX

How can you be a child and at the same time be one with Him? This is a paradox, very difficult to understand. But that is the truth. When God led Ramdas on the path of spiritual discipline in order to purify him and make him fit to receive His full grace, he knew that he

was under His protection He was crying to God to reveal Himself to him so that he could become entirely His He would have his mind always remembering, thinking, contemplating on Him alone, without having anything to do with the things of the world. God heard that prayer and as a result He, who is seated in Ramdas' heart, took possession of him and granted His vision and experience. He showered His grace like this, and revealed Himself in all His grandeur to him and told him, 'O child, you and I are not different We are one in the highest spiritual sense' Thereafter His light and grace overflowed in this child He feels one with Him and still he is His child and servant, for God is his mother and master As master He guides him, and as mother He protects him

When Ramdas was in France last month he met Swami Siddheswarananda there after about ten years The Swamiji remarked that Ramdas was growing younger People in India wondered how Ramdas would be able to stand this strenuous tour. Ramdas told them that God is there to see that His mission is fulfilled It is not that Ramdas has come to teach you. You know what you have to realise You know what you have to gain You know by experience that He is within you But it is a joy to talk of Him This is the greatest thing. You may take God to be the impersonal Truth, you may take Him to be personal But besides these, He is your true companion. He is your father and mother and is always with you. You can talk to Him, you can glorify Him, you can sing of Him and you can do all things in His name and enjoy eternal Bliss. To merge yourself in Him is nothing but to feel His fellowship and do everything in His name This gives unparalleled joy. You cannot express it You can only experience it.

If you only depend upon the personal companionship of God, it is sure that you will feel a painful sense of separation when you miss Him If you experience only the impersonal Truth, you are likely to be disturbed while moving about in the world of action, name and form. There is still a greater experience. You have to realise

the supreme Godhead who is at once personal and impersonal When you have realised this, you are established in absolute peace and bliss in whatever condition you are placed Knowing your identity with Him, you remain separate from Him, maintaining a close relationship with Him as between child and mother, servant and master, or friend and friend.

"MY DEVOTEE NEVER PERISHES"

In this constant companionship with God, you never miss Him even for a single minute. You feel His presence everywhere You know that He is guiding you at every step, and your love flows out spontaneously towards all. There is ever freshness and cheer in your life. There is neither fatigue nor depression. It is like this. When the mother is there, the child is joyous, and when she is away it is restless Similarly when you feel His presence, you are happy He is the dearest object of your heart You can feel His presence more intimately than that of your own kith and kin You can see and touch Him, He is nearer to you than anybody else If you have a relationship with Him, you are supremely blessed Then there is no likelihood of your falling away from Him Therefore He has said in the Bhagavad Gita, "My devotee never perishes" This is when you have surrendered yourself to Him completely When you hold Him, there is always a likelihood of your falling When you surrender to Him, He holds you and you are ever safe and secure Then you can bravely move in the world and still remain perfectly pure and unaffected No temptation can attack you and pull you down to the life of your lower nature. You will remain firmly fixed in the Divine consciousness in which you realise your oneness with God and feel 'I and He are one'. In Spirit you are ever one with Him; but you remain as His children, not to fulfil your plan but to fulfil His plan, to spread the spontaneous love which flows out of your heart God is love, and when He reveals Himself in your heart, your entire life will be animated by this love.

SUBORDINATE INTELLECT TO HEART

It is said that through intellect you must try to under-

stand God. But reason can create only doubts It intervenes and spoils your faith in God So reason is considered useful only up to a stage in spiritual progress Then you have to open the portals of your heart and give all your love to that Divine Being. God resides in the heart which is the seat of love All the scriptures declare that love is the real nature and attribute of God If you have to see Him, your head must bow down to the heart Let reason be quiet for a while Open the windows of your heart. Give all your adoration to Him so that His grace may bring in you complete transformation Now you become an illumined being and you will know that you and He are not different. Your actions then belong to eternity. You live like the sun giving light to all The sun gives light because it is his nature Your true nature is to shed love, peace and joy on all Yours will be selfless, motiveless love, and motiveless action will flow out of you. A child plays Why does it play? Because it is its nature to play Similarly your actions will be spontaneous. This is the message of the Bhagavad Gita It is the ego that claims, 'This is my action' When the ego is absent, you become inspired always by the Divine in you. You are a veritable image of God.

GOD—THE MAGNET

Here Ramdas may tell you something important from his own experience First of all he must declare that nothing can be achieved on the spiritual path unless God's grace descends on us He must first awaken us It is Grace alone in the beginning, in the middle and at the end of our spiritual endeavours Man in his arrogance says he is able to do all things If a man thinks he is able to do anything, let him do it He will come to know by experience that by his effort he is not able to do anything When that stage is reached, he surrenders to God, confessing that he is helpless. Unless we feel we are nothing and He is everything, He will not accept us So He alone must guide us on the difficult path of spiritual discipline. A devotee rightly says, 'O God, I remember

You because You remembered me first' He must draw us towards Him. Then alone we can go to Him It is just like a needle attracted by a magnet We must become needles for the Divine magnet to draw us towards It. How to become needles? This is possible only by wishing to have Him, aspiring to have Him and Him alone and nothing else in the world

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE MIND IS

A question is often raised why our mind is restless and cannot concentrate on God. The reason is that our love for God is so very little If it is intense, our mind will automatically go to Him Where our love is, there our mind is We love worldly things more than we love God We must pray to Him to give us one-pointed love and devotion to Him Through constant remembrance of Him we have to purify our mind There is no other way to purify it. Only the thought of God can remove all passions from it and make it perfectly pure In the pure mind God's light reflects "Blessed is he who is pure in heart because he shall see God" God must sow the seed of the Divine name in our mind Then only it will sprout and grow and in the fullness of time bring forth the flower of divine radiance, peace and joy This is possible only when His grace is on us Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa gives the instance of a kitten that cries from a corner with the result that the cat rushes and takes it up So if we cry with all our heart — if we surrender to Him completely — God will surely respond. When we have once become His, He guides our life and we become aware that it is He who creates all circumstances and situations from time to time He is so merciful, compassionate and kind, and from Him no evil can come

THE SOURCE OF EVIL

Where is evil then? It is in the mind which is not in tune with God. Forgetfulness of God is the cause of all evil in the world. There is a saying, 'Good or evil, thinking makes it so.' If we reflect on the events of our life, we find that by taking some of them to be evil we

have suffered We have taken some as for our good and and we have been happy So it is our attitude towards the events that makes us either miserable or happy There is no standard of good and evil The ideas of sin and misery arise from the denial of God So long as we are in tune with Him, we take every situation in which He places us as for our good Then we say, 'Thy will be done' So the man who has surrendered himself to God does not grumble or find fault with anybody In all conditions he enjoys perfect peace and bliss This is the real test of surrender

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO PRAISE THE NAME

Before Ramdas closes, he would tell you that God in His mercy gave him His holy name for remembering Him constantly When the Name was on his lips, he felt as if he was having a nectarine pill on his tongue He was thus enjoying the sweetness of communion with God the moment the Name came on his tongue God who was hidden within Ramdas became manifest and His light entered into every part of Ramdas' being through which His glory radiated

Ramdas met in Europe many disciples of Christ and told them that the name of Jesus is so sweet They wanted the name of Jesus to be given to them from Ramdas' lips They admitted Jesus' name is very sweet It is not enough to praise the Name, but you must take the Name 'The taste of the pudding lies in eating' You must have the Name continuously on your tongue with love and adoration for Him in your heart Ramdas was repeating the Name day and night without break For the sake of uttering the Name at all times, he kept vigil all the night. For this he had to give up food He went in solitude and for twentyfour hours he was chanting the Name and he was getting into divine ecstasies

NAME IS A BRIDGE BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

Such is the power of the Name The Name purifies you and raises you to the pinnacle of God-realisation It

is so simple, yet so powerful and potent Know that divine grace comes to you, if you have the Name always on your tongue For, you become conscious of Him within and He reveals Himself in all His splendour and absorbs you into His being Then the difference between you and He is lost Name is the bridge between you and God.

Which name of God you repeat is not of importance. But you must remember that the Name represents God within you. So you can repeat any Name you hold dear and fill yourself with divine ecstasy This is the easiest and best method by which you can purify yourself This is what the sages and saints in all parts of the world are dinning into your ears Think of God and you become the image of God Take the holy Name and you become holy You need not do any other spiritual practice than praying to God and taking His name This is the positive and direct method for His light, power and joy to pour into and change you by removing all the obstacles as the ego-sense and all the desires such as ambition for name and fame

Ramdas has nothing by himself to talk except what God wants him to talk He is not a scholar and he has no academic education So he talks to you like a child. By hearing him, so many who had only a lukewarm devotion for God, had it intensified, and those who had not any, got it This is the humble mission with which he goes from place to place — to awaken God in the hearts of people Faith should guide us and not reason A friend asked Ramdas once why God should have given the intellect if it is not to be used He answered "Intellect is given in order to know that we do not know anything" Heart is given to us so that we can feel Him, realise Him, love Him and have Him

AN UPANISHAD STORY

There is a story in the Upanishads On a tree there were two birds One was sitting quiet on the topmost branch. The other bird was hopping about here and there on a lower branch, tasting the fruits, some of which were

sour and some sweet. When it ate the sour fruits it was unhappy, but it was happy when it ate the sweet ones So with unhappiness and happiness alternating, it was going on till it looked up and saw the bird that was sitting quiet and serene As soon as the bird on the lower branch saw the one on the top sitting quiet, the former ceased to exist So also the ego in us, enjoying the sweet and sour fruits of life, one day looks up to the Divine and ceases to exist Some say you merge in God and you have nothing left That is not the case You now know you are one with God and still you are His child, servant or a devotee In this way you keep up the relationship with Him All your worldly ambitions are wiped out and your life flows out in streams of love to the entire humanity. This is the state you have to attain This is the ideal which the great incarnations, that have come to the world for the uplift of humanity, place before you

Saints and incarnations are a source of great inspiration Ramdas often brings before him the figure of Jesus, because Ramdas has seen him in a vision when he was living in a cave in the Himalayas He saw Jesus sitting before him If we remember saints, our heart simply bubbles with joy How pure, glorious and innocent they are! And that such an innocent one like Jesus, full of divine light, should be crucified! The very thought of it gives such a revulsion to the things of the world All things we call our own come and go We neither bring them with us when we are born, nor do we take them with us when we go We still attach ourselves to these things, forgetting the supreme Master, who can make us like Him and raise us to His stature What love He bears for all of us! What wonderful love it is!

WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT

God's grace came to Ramdas and made him what he is now. Ramdas feels that it is nothing to have dedicated one life for what he has attained. He could sacrifice millions of lives for it at the feet of the Master After all, what do we give to God? Only the perishable part

of us What does He give in return? He gives us the Imperishable. We even hesitate to give him the perishable in exchange for the Imperishable What the pleasures of the world give us is nothing compared to the divine light and the peace and joy that you get by union with Him That joy is eternal. In scriptures it is described as self-existent Bliss The Bliss does not depend upon any state or condition Whether you are in a high or a low position, whether people praise you or blame you, that bliss within you is flowing out perennially God is Sat-Chit-Ananda Such a Truth you are If you are conscious of it, if you become one with it, what more do you want? That is why it is said to be self-existent — therefore self-sufficient

A LIVING REALITY

God is a living Reality. He is not a hallucination or mere conception of the mind as some take Him to be Those who say so are entirely mistaken. Scientists cannot find out what He is They want to put Him in the test-tube and find out what He is and is not No, that is not the way God is Truth Thirtythree years now, Ramdas got the joy of union with Him and the contact and realisation continues to this date. It will continue for all time This is not phantasy This is not imagination Ramdas can definitely say that God is and He is eternal love and bliss This is the experience of the sages and saints all over the world People may say as they like, because they do not know They do not seek Him and therefore do not find Him You must have faith in the words of the saints who have experienced the Truth Suppose you want to go to India You must have faith in the words of one who has gone there. He shows you the path You follow him and reach India So also you have to take the words of saints with faith and follow the path chalked out by them Then you will also surely find Him.

ST PAUL, MINNESOTA, U S. A,

15th October, 1954.

Speech at Curtis Hotel

HOW TO CONTROL THE MIND

Dear Friends, — Today Ramdas has been asked to talk on the subject 'How to control the mind' As you all know, to control the mind is indeed very difficult. But control of the mind is essential for the spiritual aspirant who is a real seeker of God and wants to attain Him

When we sit for meditation or for prayer, we find that our mind is wandering and thinks of various things. So when we wish to concentrate upon God, we are unable to do so or find it extremely difficult This is a great obstacle in the path Every one of us knows by experience that whenever we find we have committed something wrong, we make a resolution that we will not do it again. In the first instance, we do not realise at all that we have done anything wrong. But in due time, when we come in contact with a great soul, a person who is living a righteous life, believing in God and drawing inspiration from Him, we are awakened, and come to know that we are going on a wrong path. But even after knowing that, we go the same way, we are unable to control the mind We are helpless The mind induces us to do things which we ought not to do Here lies our difficulty. How often we see a man who is given to certain vice, bringing disgrace and degradation on himself and misery upon others! A day comes when he repents for his acts and wants to control himself and says that he will no longer be subject to that vice. But he finds it very difficult to abstain from it and falls a prey to it again He is helpless He is unable to have any control over his thoughts and actions.

GOD MUST COME TO THE RESCUE

Under such circumstances, how to get the necessary strength to subdue the mind and make it think on the

right lines so as to live the right life? God must come to our rescue Ramdas can quote many instances in which people who were given to the worst of vices, when they came in contact with a saint, gave up entirely such vices against which they were battling in vain for years together. So the first thing necessary is to contact a great soul, a soul who is the beloved of God. He can infuse strength and courage in our heart so that we can draw the necessary strength to put down wrong desires that make our life miserable So the power for control comes to us from God As we commune with Him, meditate on Him and pray to Him sincerely, we will be able to control the mind and free it from all thoughts which lead us astray, and we shall be saved So God comes into play in our life when we sincerely call for His help and depend entirely upon His power to save us This is most true in the case of a spiritual seeker who really wishes to have that peace, purity and joy which is born of communion with God This is the chief aim of human existence

According to all religions, certain forms of discipline are imposed upon us for self-purification Purification is possible only by our putting ourselves under some strict discipline in our conduct, in our way of life. If we allow ourselves to be carried away by every thought that rises in our mind, every impulse that seizes us, then we stray away from the path of righteousness Therefore it is incumbent upon every one of us, from time to time, to retire from our worldly activities, sit silent by ourselves, pray to the Divine residing within us, and draw the necessary inspiration, in order to resist all temptations and keep our mind perfectly pure. This is the only way. Because, without surrendering ourselves to the Divine, without meditating upon Him constantly, we cannot get full control over the mind There are some people who vainly think that by their own efforts they will be able to control and keep their mind concentrated upon God So many people who had been struggling for years and years have found it a hopeless task

SECRET OF SUCCESS

Ramdas, in his wandering life, once came across a man who had renounced the world in order to realise God. He was striving for thirty years, but had not a glimpse of Him. Ramdas found out from a talk with him that he was struggling by his own strength, which was so very feeble compared to the great strength which we can draw from God That was the cause of his failure Even if we struggle hard for any number of years, we cannot attain perfect purity. We can succeed only by His grace

What is the chief thing we have to do in order to make ourselves fit to receive His grace? We must have absolute humility and think always of His glory and power The glow-worm that shines at night is not seen when the sun shines. As it shines in darkness, so our ego shines in forgetfulness of God When we are awakened to the knowledge of God, when we remember Him constantly and think of His greatness and glory, then our ego dwindles into insignificance Man is proud because he has forgotten God and His greatness. So we must bring into our mind His greatness and glory, as that practice will make us pure and humble, and all undesirable thoughts and desires will disappear at once This is the secret

Some people believe that they should practise discipline like Ashtanga Yoga, as described by Patanjali, a great sage of India. Ramdas has tried these methods, but he found that they are not suitable for us Devotion and surrender to God is the easiest way. Let us be conscious that we are His children and He is dwelling in our heart. Then we must commune with Him through prayer, and He will guide and lead us He will fill us with His grace so that our life may be pure in thought, word and deed In this way He makes us utterly divine We shall now be free from all temptations and can freely move in the world as if we have put on an armour against which nothing can prevail. We are protected by the Divine in

every way This is the life which Ramdas has been leading for the last thirty-three years When his mind became restless, he prayed to God to give him constant remembrance Thereafter His holy name was constantly on his lips

HOW TO REPEAT GOD'S NAME

How are we to repeat God's name? It should not be with pride If you repeat the Name with pride, you will not get any benefit If you are humble and meek, then alone you will derive real benefit This is Ramdas' experience The real thing we have to do is to keep up a continuous stream of God-remembrance, and that is possible by taking His holy name with all devotion, faith and love Then you will discover tremendous changes taking place in you Your mind will become crystal pure and you will find God's power and light reflecting in you. You will at once become conscious of God whom you have been seeking You will feel His presence within you, everywhere about you You will see the whole universe as the expression of Divinity. This, the highest vision, the simple but the most powerful name of God will give you.

No doubt, we are all struggling in so many ways to attain God, to realise Him, but we harbour within us the sense of ego We think we are doing everything by our own power The result is that our efforts do not become fruitful We fall at every step so long as the egoism persists When the ego-sense is eradicated, we realise that God is all in all Let the ego struggle on until it comes to know that by its efforts and by its own power it cannot achieve anything great and real Then it bends down before God and acknowledges its helplessness. Now God becomes our helper There is a word in Sanskrit — Anatha Natha — which means the Helper of the helpless. This is an attribute of God How can He become our friend when we think we are capable of taking care of ourselves? God is not far away from us. When we realise our helplessness and go to Him in a spirit of com-

plete surrender, depending entirely upon Him. His grace is bound to flow into us and transform us. All the evils in us will disappear that very instant. We are changed into the very expressions of Divinity His light, power and glory will shine out in us and we become His embodiments By attaining this state we will love all beings alike without any distinction, because a heart in which God has manifested, will pour out love towards the whole creation. This highest vision has been held out as the greatest attainment of a devotee. The Bhagavad Gita presents this vision before mankind, which is to look upon the whole universe as the form of the universal Truth — God

GRACE LIBERATES

Today's subject is 'How to control the mind' Let us make all efforts until we know that by our striving we cannot get Him and that by His grace alone we can attain Him When this knowledge dawns, our struggle ceases. Then we surrender to Him and call on Him to free us from the earthly bonds which do not permit us to raise ourselves to the divine consciousness

Jesus has rightly said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us We seek Him everywhere else. while all the time He is within us He is the Soul of our soul. He is the Life of our life We do everything by His will and power We have ignored this fact We feel we have nobody to look after us We have so many cares and anxieties and are ever in a state of unrest, because we have not recognised God's existence If we follow the teachings of Jesus, we shall surely find Him in our heart When we have found Him we shall have fulfilled the purpose of our life. If we are born only to enjoy the senses, we could as well have been animals Why should God give us the gift of speaking and the gift of understanding or discrimination? All these He has given us in order that we may use them for realising Him Let us in our humble way attune ourselves to Him from day to day, and ultimately surrender to Him and see that His

power works in us. Then we can safely walk on the path that leads us to Him.

RENUNCIATION — NOT EXTERNAL

It is not by mere external renunciation that we attain Him There are so many who have renounced the world and gone to the forests, but they have not attained Him. Many others living in the world and sincerely dedicating their work to God have found Him It is not the external condition that matters so much as our inner state of mind. If we dedicate our life to Him, it does not matter where we live We can live in the family and still have Him, because God is not in caves and forests, He is in us, with us and everywhere about us So to realise Him we need not go anywhere

It appears a man, not finding God in the world, left the world and went to the forest far away from the haunts of men, and stayed there in a cave, feeling that the company of worldly people was not at all favourable for realising God He did his austerities in the solitude and prayed to God to show Himself to him He prayed long for years Finally God gave him His vision in the form of the world The man now felt how foolish he was to leave the world and come away, when the world itself was God He went back to the world

The world is pervaded by Him, rather the world is God Himself He is in our heart Why should we run away from Him? Do you think in solitude alone you can have Him? Solitude may be necessary in order to find Him within, so that the outside noises may not disturb our communion with Him Ramdas remembers the famous words of Emerson, 'The great man is he who enjoys the sweetness of solitude in the midst of the crowd' This is a wonderful saying This is possible when you are in tune with God. We feel that He is our constant companion even when we are moving about amidst the crowd, when we know that the crowd itself is the expression of God. Then we cannot say that God is far away, while He can be seen before us in so many forms It is in that

spirit Ramdas is moving about in the midst of people everywhere in the world. He finds God in every form he beholds — the supreme Beloved of his. He is in the heart of every one of you. The Lord says, 'I dwell in the heart of every being and creature.'

HINTS FOR MIND CONTROL

With regard to control of mind, Ramdas will give you some hints. Whatever work you are doing, know that you are doing it by the will of God Even when you are taking His name, feel that God has put His name on your tongue. If you do so with full surrender to Him, the name of God will taste very sweet. Your mind will be intoxicated with joy. You may chant the name of God in any way you like, mentally or vocally, and you will find it yields you nothing but nectar

Ramdas has experience of this. He is not telling this from books. From the time God's name came to his lips, he had felt he was blessed He had unshakable faith in the Name He found that Name and God are not different Name itself is God. The moment he started uttering the Name, he made out it was not a means to an end, but an end in itself His heart welled up with joy and peace. Just as when you put a lozenge into your mouth, it does not take time to give you sweetness, so also the moment you take God's name, the eternal spring within you gushes out as it were, and you are filled with all joy and peace, in all parts of your being there is nothing but the vibrations of joy. That is how Ramdas lost himself in that Consciousness He found it was not difficult to control the mind and eradicate all evils from it through the Name Automatically it happened

When our heart is filled with divine light and peace, where is the chance for other desires to enter it, where is the place for dislike and illwill? When the mind is absorbed in God, it cannot think of anything else, in that state you live and act, and you never do wrong You are never tempted Even if you are tempted, you never fall under its spell, because you are under the protection of

God. So this child fearlessly travels to all places, and God in His mysterious way protects him, guides and leads him, and feeds and looks after him.

You may look upon Jesus as the very incarnation of God. Do not think that he is merely a human being. Many people doubt how God can assume a human form made up of flesh and blood This is a mistake Truly. God reveals Himself as a human being to save and liberate us So, Jesus is an incarnation of God just as we in India have Rama, Krishna, Buddha and others You can visualise his form as it is handed down to us in pictures, statues and images Bring the image in your mind and take his sweet Name You will find that your mind gets concentration immediately

Or, if you take the Name itself as your safest guide to take you to God, then repeat the Name The charming sound of that Name will enable you to concentrate upon God Your mind will be drawn towards it Whenever you hear the name of any object which you love most, the sound of that name is dear to you Thus the name of your child, whom you love deeply, sounds very sweet to you You are never tired of hearing its name whenever you take it or somebody utters it, your mind is at once turned to the child, because you love the child. So, if you have real love for God, then His name must sound sweet to you and your mind will easily attain concentration A snake charmer in India brings before you a serpent which moves about here and there He takes his flute and plays on it The serpent now stands still, while it listens to the music Similarly, the mind that listens with love to the Divine name is at once arrested It stops its distracting activities and becomes completely still In that mental stillness God reveals Himself It is said in the Bible, 'Be still and know that I am God' If you want to realise that you are one with Him, let your mind be perfectly still Stillness is achieved by regaling the mind with the sweetness of God's name

There is another way of controlling the mind Whatever you think of, take it to be God, so that your mind

may be permanently thinking only of Him to the exclusion of everything else. The mind may wander as it likes Whenever it thinks of an object, identify that object with God Then the mind will be filled with only God-thought

Another method is to watch the mind When you sit in silent meditation — this indeed requires practice — you have to watch the mind, detaching yourself from its activities Repetition of God's name helps to get this type of meditation God is the still, calm, changeless, all-pervading Spirit You sit silent, watching the mind When you say, 'My mind is restless', that means you are not the mind You falsely think that you are the mind. You are the possessor of the mind In this attitude you sit silent, by yourself, and watch the mind which is not yourself As you become more and more detached from the mind and become the watcher, the mind becomes still, all thoughts disappear automatically. What will happen then? The mind will dissolve completely and you will have the super-conscious experience that you are one with Divine within you You will realise that you are the supreme universal Spirit In that state there is nothing but God

RAMDAS' EXPERIENCES

For two years Ramdas was remembering God by simply repeating His name He did not know then what meditation was But he put upon himself many restrictions He was adjusting his diet and active life in such a way as to have constant remembrance of God He had his fasts and vigils After one or two years, one day God inspired him to sit for meditation He did not know what meditation was Still he sat down in a particular posture and closed his eyes At once his mind merged in a strange ecstasy His body-idea was lost and in that state of self-absorption he remained for about three hours It was not yet a state in which he lost total consciousness of the body. The joy he felt was inexpressible. He could not easily come out of that state He sat still and it was after some struggle that he regained external consciousness. Then he was gifted with a new vision He saw one light pervading

everywhere It was not the light of the lamp or the sun, the moon or the stars. It was a strange subtle light that shone everywhere, and the mind had been sublimated entirely He felt nothing but ecstasy, peace, joy and love. This was all brought about by the the repetition of God's name

God had made Ramdas very humble from the very start He gave him the name which means 'Servant of God' Later on He made him His child Now he is a child going about talking of God He wants him to talk about Him to all of you here and also to other friends whom he meets in the course of his tour They all like to hear Ramdas because he speaks out of his own experience God provides everything You have only to depend upon Him and He will afford you all that is necessary for your progress The Lord says in the Bhagvad Gita: "To those who worship Me alone thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security" That has been found perfectly true in Ramdas' life Ramdas let himself go completely and depended on God so utterly that he went about in India just like a wandering child. He had nothing with him except one piece of cloth India is a vast country Roaming in India is no joke, entirely depending upon God God looked after this child wonderfully, clothed him and fed him

Our dependence on God must be absolute It is not that we must purify ourselves first and then go to Him. He must purify us We must go to Him like a child. A child goes dirty to the mother The mother does not reject it or ask it to come clean She takes the child, washes it, and dresses it with clean clothes God is more loving than any earthly mother

Now you know the answer to the question, 'How to control the mind' It is so very simple You need not have any strenuous discipline Simply put yourself in the hands of God Surrender yourself to Him and keep your mind always in tune with Him by taking His sweet name. It is such a happy and blissful exercise It is not a discipline at all, it is a joy Then the thing is done, and

His grace descends Purification, control, concentration and meditation are all achieved without any strain It is not by struggling hard for a long time that you get the result The result is attained at the start itself Beginning is the goal When you put your feet on the path, you are at the goal

Let us now sit silent for five minutes. Think of God within you, and pray to Him to give you the experience of Him within you and everywhere about you.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U. S A,

17th October, 1954.

Speech at the Y.M C.A.

DIVINE LOVE AND SERVICE

Dear Friends, — Ramdas is going to speak to you today on a subject which is very dear to his heart, viz., Divine Love and Service Before we attempt to comprehend the full significance of Divine love, let us try to know the difference between the two kinds of love — human love and Divine love. Human love relates to the physical and mental side of our life Divine love relates to the spiritual side of our life We love our relations and friends because of our physical and mental affinity towards them This is not the sort of love that will make us unite with another in the way in which Jesus Christ wants us to do He said, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' He used the word 'self' there. 'Self' does not mean mind or body. It is something superior to these, that which is permanent in us On the basis of the knowledge of the permanent in us and in others, we have to love our neighbour.

Our neighbour is only apparently different from us He is essentially one with us, because the one God who pervades everywhere, who is the omnipresent Sprit, is residing in the hearts of all. We have to love another on the basis of this knowledge, that we are one with the other in Spirit This spiritual oneness it is that makes us really love another as we love ourselves. So, what we have to do is to get rid of the individual sense that gives us the feeling that we are separate from our fellow-beings This can go only when, in meditation, we identify ourselves with the universal Spirit — God — and in all our actions tune our life with the universal Life, which is nothing but the expression of the universal Spirit If we wish to identify ourselves with the universal Spirit, we must live such a life as will enable us to realise this Truth We are therefore asked to be forgiving, compassionate and kind to all living beings on earth We

must serve others who are in distress and help those who need help By such services we shall be expanding our vision, and this will enable us to mingle our life with the universal Life

BE ONE WITH THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

As it is, we feel we are different from the rest of the world This is the cause of our misery and bondage. The moment we shed our ego-sense by uniting our life with the universal Life, we realise we are the universal Spirit We forget that Spirit and feel separate from it. We thereby degrade ourselves and cause unhappiness to others If we want to enjoy the bliss of eternal life, we must give up the ego-sense by surrendering ourselves to the divine power, and by identifying ourselves with the supreme, all-pervading, calm and changeless omnipresent Spirit — God So, our prayers must be to unite ourselves with the Divine within us and make our life as an offering, as an oblation, to His service, so that we can attune our individual life with the universal Life — the manifest aspect of the Divine

Now Ramdas will speak about the teachings of great incarnations of the world — Buddha, Christ and Krishna — with regard to the attainment of this universal vision based on the realisation of the Cosmic Spirit When we feel separate from others, we have no love Love is acquired by realising the supreme Spirit Jesus is an embodiment of love because he is the incarnation of the Spirit When we feel one with others in Spirit, our love freely flows towards them; we cannot help loving and serving them In their service we get real joy and peace.

If we want to release our life from the fetters of bondage, we must realise God — the universal Spirit That is why we are having prayers and meditations so that we can merge our life with the universal Life and our spirit with the universal Spirit Those who have realised their oneness with God behold the whole universe as His manifestation An example that stands predominantly in Ramdas' mind is that of Rev C F Andrews, who went

out to India and came in contact with Rabindranath Tagore, who was a Vedantin

TEACHING OF YAJNAVALKYA

When Rev Andrews went to see Tagore, he raised the question as to how he could really understand the meaning of Jesus' words, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' He was puzzled as to how it could be possible between two separate individuals, to love each other as one self It is very hard to comprehend the words of great souls when they speak from their height of God-vision Tagore then told him that the key to this problem was in the Upanishads.

There is a conversation in the Upanishads between a great sage and his wife who lived in ancient times His name was Yajnavalkya One day his wife came to him and asked for the knowledge of the Immortal He said, "You can have the knowledge of the Immortal even in your everyday active life by loving everybody as yourself" She again asked how this could be possible He replied, "The Self within you and the Self within another is one and the same So love your husband not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Self Love your son not for the sake of the son, but for the sake of the Self Love everybody, because he is not a mere body as he appears to be, but he is your own Self" When this conversation was explained to Rev Andrews, he was satisfied

So when we look at this question in the light of Self-knowledge, we find the right solution We have no reason to think that we are essentially different from others due to caste, creed, colour or nationality We are all children of one God — expressions, forms or embodiments of one Spirit If we only know this, we shall have no quarrel with our fellow-beings We shall live in perfect harmony and peace Everyone will enjoy the supreme bliss and peace through union with that Truth pervading everywhere Therefore it is said, love is the light of the eternal, and is the best solvent for dissolving diversity and creating unity, to destroy discord and create harmony

A MAHABHARATA STORY

In the Mahabharata, the great epic of the Hindus, we read a story about Yudhishtira, a great king of that time, who led a perfectly virtuous life. He was loving, kind and generous to everybody. His love for others was so great that he could not see any evil in them. There was another prince in the same kingdom, Duryodhana, who was of a bad nature. He was a tyrant and people hated him. It so happened one day Lord Krishna called these two and first asked Yudhishtira to go out into the kingdom and find out a bad man. Yudhishtira sought for a bad man everywhere and returned and said that he could not find a bad man. Lord Krishna then asked the other one, Duryodhana, to go out and find a good man. After a long search he also returned and said that he could not find a good man anywhere.

The moral of this story is that if we are good, the whole world is good for us; if we are bad, the whole world is bad for us. Every man has got some good points in him. We should see only the good points. If we are to see the bad points let us see them in ourselves. If we do so, we shall find in course of time that what is bad in us will disappear. If we see evil in others and good in us, what good we have will disappear and the evil in us will grow. We are condemning, criticising, and thinking ill of so many in the world. By so doing we are only getting our mind more and more impure. So the way to progress is to see the good points in others and love everybody. If there are some evil points in us — such as ego-sense and bad desires — we must repent and pray to God for their removal. To see good in others is to see God in them, because God alone is good. By seeing God in others, we shall realise God in our own heart. So long as we criticise others, we shall never see God in them.

When a man does not love his brother, and still says he loves God, he is a liar. If you have true love for God, you must love all beings in the world, because He

is seated in the hearts of them all. To hate anybody is to hate God So, the criterion to find whether we really have love for God is whether we have love for our fellow-beings Our love must be such that it should not see faults in others It is that love that redeems, uplifts and illumines people. It is that love that pours out from the eyes and hearts of saints and sages You contact them and they never condemn you for your faults They uplift you, purify you, and enlighten you with the knowledge of the Eternal

LOVE THAT SEES NO FAULT

There are two kinds of love — love that sees faults and then forgives, and love that does not see faults at all Which is greater? Love that does not see faults. We have seen no many sages in India, living in forests, having wild beasts as their companions In the ordinary course, these wild beasts would pounce upon human beings. but in the company of these saints, they are like tame animals that play with them The saint sees God in them and therefore they are so friendly, so calm Ramdas had his experience when a serpent wound round his leg He was looking upon it as God's own form and had no fear Why are we afraid? Because we live in diversity When we behold the Divine everywhere, whom are we to be afraid of? We become fearless When we are one with the universal Spirit, where is 'another' to be afraid of?

When we act in ignorance, we do not recognise the kinship of the Spirit So what we do is that we think others are different from us and we fight with them We hate them, exploit them and do so many evils on the plane of duality Ignorance is the root of all our troubles. If we only take a leap into the infinite Existence — God — who is the basis of the entire manifest life in the universe, we are free from the sense of separation and become the happiest beings on earth We are then the embodiments of divine love and joy It is love that changes the hearts of persons It is not by condemnation that we can reform others By a loving touch we can transform

a man, just as by a touch of the philosopher's stone we can turn the basest metal into gold.

LOVE THAT REDEEMS

Ramdas had experiences like that. Once it happened *that a man who had no faith in God wanted to pick up* a quarrel with Ramdas. He wanted to come to the Ashram. News of this came to Ramdas in advance, with the advice from friends that the man should not be allowed to enter the Ashram as he was not a person of good character. Ramdas did not like the advice. Meanwhile, the person came to the Ashram. As soon as he entered, Ramdas went to greet him and gave him a warm, loving embrace. That embrace did the thing. At once he became a changed man. He fell at Ramdas' feet saying, "You are a holy man. You have touched me and embraced me." He went into ecstasies and from that time his whole life was changed. If Ramdas had stopped him from coming, he would have gone away becoming still worse. The best way was to love him because he lived in ignorance.

Did not Christ forgive those who crucified him? Was it an ordinary love that forgave freely all that was done against him? It is love that comes from such great souls that redeems us. When love is there, there is bubbling joy. No sacrifice is too great to relieve the distress of humanity. Jesus made a supreme sacrifice by giving his life on the cross. From this you can make out how great was his love for us. If you only think of it you will be thrilled.

All the great sages and saints were persecuted much, because they were lovers of humanity. They wanted to serve humanity and redeem those who were fallen. But people did not understand and they persecuted and killed them. The more they were persecuted the more their greatness was revealed. Goldsmith had said that great souls are like aromatic leaves. If you crush the leaves, the perfume spreads out everywhere. So also under persecution the glory of saints manifests. They live in the Spirit and never care what happens to the flesh. How

are they disposed towards those who persecute them? They are all love, compassion and forgiveness. They pray to God to forgive them They do not condemn or curse them From the heart of saints curses never come

GOD NEVER PUNISHES

God never punishes. By our own action, we reward or punish ourselves God is ever forgiving. He does not reject us. We have only to turn towards Him, and He purifies us by His grace. God is therefore defined as love. You will find the same definition about God given in all religions. He is our mother and father The human mother or father may sometimes punish us, but God never punishes us He is million times more loving than the earthly mother. If we find the Divine Mother residing in our heart and we feel one with Her, how sublime our life becomes!

SERVE HIM IN HUMANITY

We see so much suffering in the world Those who relieve such suffering are nearer to God than others Our love that goes towards the sufferers destroys the walls of separation between us and them Do not think that we shall ever be in want if we help our brethren and depend upon God Good things are coming to us only for serving Him in the form of humanity If we think we have earned them by hard labour, wherefrom did we get the strength to labour? Surely the power came from Him We must be beholden to Him for what He has given us We should offer them at His feet for His service Feed those who are hungry, clothe those who are naked, educate those who are illiterate Give light to those who are in the dark about God, so that they may be aware of Him

GIFT OF DEVOTION IS THE HIGHEST

Gifts are said to be of three kinds — gift of food, gift of education, and gift of devotion If you give food, it will appease one's hunger only once If you give education to one, that will enable him to earn his bread

But the soul-hunger cannot be appeased by either of these gifts. That food is devotion to God. By that the soul gets satisfaction and attains everlasting peace. Truly, to awaken man and inspire him to devote himself to God, to aim at the realisation of God, is the greatest gift that can be conferred on him. This is what the saints do. They intensify the hunger of those who have a little hunger for God, and they create hunger in those who have no hunger.

If one loves us, how happy we feel! If the whole world loves us, how much happier we must feel! God says, 'If you give Me one unit of love, I will give you million units of love.' What we have to do is to love God with all our heart. We shall then get in return infinite love from Him. There is a saying by an Indian saint, 'When God becomes your friend, the whole world is friendly to you.' We complain that people dislike us. That is because we have no love for them. If we love them, their love automatically flows to us. When their love comes to us and our love again goes to them, the two streams mingle together and create a wider river of joy. It is not bargaining. It is not a 'give and take'. It is only a spontaneous outflow of our love uniting with the love of all beings on the plane of life, founded on the oneness of the Spirit.

ST PAUL, MINNESOTA, U S A,

18th October, 1954

At Mr J R Raymer's Residence,
316 Stonebridge Blvd, St Paul 5.

GOD IS THE DEITY OF YOUR HEART

Beloved Friends, — Everybody wants God. But they do not know where to find Him They think that He is somewhere outside This is a mistake they make. They try to see Him in churches, mosques, temples, caves, mountains and the like They pray to a God who is far away in the heaven As Jesus has rightly said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is within you' This is the great secret he taught his disciples A devotee was once told to seek God in places of pilgrimage, shrines and temples He wandered all over India, visited all the temples, bathed in all sacred rivers, but with all this he could not find God Then in a state of despair, he sat on a stone and reflected within himself that his life had been wasted as he could not find God In this state his mind was drawn within From within God spoke to him 'I am here' There is a saying, 'Be still and know that I am God' The mind must be perfectly waveless, free from all thoughts, calm and serene It is then that you become conscious of God within you Just as you cannot clearly see your face reflected in moving waters, but you see the reflection when the water is still, so you cannot have the consciousness of God so long as the mind is restless But when the mind is still, He reveals Himself to you in your heart In such a pure and waveless state, mind as such does not exist, the Divine Spirit alone exists. The Spirit is universal.

When you know that the universal Spirit is in you, you rise above the body-idea When you know you are one with that Spirit, whatever you behold in the external world is for you nothing but the expression of the Spirit. Now you do not see any duality or diversity — not only spiritually, but even in the manifestation. Your love goes

out towards the whole creation so much so that you are above body consciousness even when you are active. Because, in this vision you are filled with a strange ecstasy that overpowers and absorbs you You live in a state of perennial joy because you attain an equal vision, where all diversity resolves into unity, all discord into harmony and all multiplicity into oneness In this ineffable experience you feel you are the very embodiment of the Divine. Your heart is absolutely pure It will never be disturbed by a single wave of desire

The great saints and sages who have realised the Truth have been dinning into our ears that God is within us In the Bhagavad Gita, God has Himself said, 'I am seated in the hearts of all beings in the world I am pervading everywhere All are in Me and I am in all' This is the great message which has been handed to us also by the great souls who have realised God, who are to us His very embodiments They are permeated with divine love, joy and bliss. It is by the contact of such great souls that we are awakened and we get the necessary strength to walk on the path By their grace we achieve the fullness of spiritual experience

Therefore contact of saints is essential Without their help we cannot step on the path The impersonal God cannot have any relationship with us We must be devoted to the personal God The saint is one who has realised both the personal and the impersonal The cosmic Spirit is present before us in the form of saints, in the form of Incarnations of the world Their grace must pour into us Then only we are inwardly awakened, and by traversing the path we reach the end of our spiritual journey, i e, God-realisation Then we know that we and God are not different As Jesus said, 'I and my Father are one'

Buddha too, in the state of Nirvana, did not see any duality. All the desires became extinct in him He rose above the body consciousness and merged in the cosmic consciousness above all diversity. He could not define his experience of the impersonal because it was

simply indescribable. He taught, 'Do not dip the string of thought into the unfathomable He who questions errs and he who answers errs' When you enter the realm of the all-pervading Spirit there is no separation You merge in the supreme Self, in other words, your little self is dissolved in the universal Self. What it is and what it is not is beyond your comprehension You can only realise it Those who have thus realised it are the images of that supreme Reality, concretised expressions of it

SAINTS MAKE SAINTS

It is said by an Indian saint that if we contact a God-realised soul, he transforms us into his own likeness The example is given of the sandalwood trees in the forest. They say that by the effect of the breeze blowing from the sandalwood trees, in course of time, the other trees close by also turn into sandalwood trees. So also by the association or company of saints, a worldly man becomes a saint. The saint's influence gradually transforms a man. That is why it is said we must keep the company of saints, serve them, hear their words and bask in the sunshine of their presence But at the same time we must see that we come under their influence We must keep the door of our heart open to it. When the sun's light falls on the lotus bud, it blossoms and gives out its fragrance and beauty So when our heart is ready to receive grace and we come in contact with saints, our life-bud blossoms and gives out its fragrance in the form of overflowing love and joy Our life becomes utterly transformed and illumined That is how saints come into being

Sri Shankara has composed a verse which means, 'In the first place you must contact a saint Then your mind will be withdrawn from the external things of the world Ultimately it will be free from all desires and become perfectly still When it becomes perfectly still, the aspirant attains liberation.'

SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA'S EXPERIENCE

Many years ago, when Swami Rama Tirtha came to to America, he addressed large audiences. Rama Tirtha

had, of course, the vision and the realisation of the universal Reality. So he had addressed the audience, 'Myself in the form of ladies and gentlemen!' 'Universe in the form of ladies and gentlemen!' When an American friend asked him, 'Who are you?', his reply was, 'I am God, so are you'

This was the experience of that great soul Those who have merged their individuality in the universal Self, do not see anything as separate from them They see everything as their own manifestation. In that way they live and move in the world They are incapable of harbouring illwill or dislike for anyone on this earth They have no selfish motives Their life flows out like springs from the mountains They are a blessing to humanity. What wonderful attainment it is for a human being, less than 6ft high, to realise that he is one with the universal Spirit, the eternal, changless, infinite and all-pervading God! What a magnificent gift of God it is to have a human birth! But we do not make use of it for the right and supreme purpose

There is a song of a Muslim saint which means, 'When I hear a fish, living in the water, say it feels thirsty, I cannot but laugh' So also are we living and moving in an infinite ocean of bliss, still we say we are miserable How is it that we are miserable and why should we be? The saint has given his reply to the question as to why the fish is thirsty and does not take water to quench its thirst even when living and moving in water It is said that the fish moves upright cutting through the water, and that unless it slightly turns to one side, water cannot enter its mouth. Similarly, unless we bend down before God, the universal Spirit, unless we give up our pride, we cannot experience the bliss, even though we are actually living in bliss It is by surrender that we become one with Him and enjoy ineffable bliss and peace. God is pure bliss, nothing but bliss, unalloyed bliss

THE SECRET OF FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

This is the quest of the man who aspires for eternal happiness and peace. Somehow we feel we are different

from God and that is the trouble with us. The moment we know we are one with Him, we are free Otherwise we are in bondage, which is selfimposed God is the only reality There is none else but God True happiness and peace are in God and nowhere else Do not think that by any external change of circumstances or conditions, you can make yourself free and happy It is an entirely false idea No earthly attainment such as wealth, health, position and social status or power can make one happy, if one is not in tune with God inwardly What joy can we get from the world? It is only momentary joy like a flicker in the darkness of the night It is like will-o'-the-wisp, like a mirage The senses do not give us real happiness There is always discontent and dissatisfaction There is no calmness or serenity, which can be had only when we tune our life with the eternal life. From the perishables we cannot expect everlasting peace and joy. Only through communion with the Eternal we can get immortal peace and joy

In his wandering life in the early days, when Ramdas was going about as a mendicant, without anything with him, depending entirely upon God, God used to feed him and look after him in His inscrutable ways He was invited by the Maharajas who took him to their palaces, made him sit on their decorated chairs, themselves sitting on the floor, and asked him, 'How did you find that joy which is beaming on your face? You do not own anything, still you are supremely happy. We are rolling in wealth and have all the earthly comforts, still we are unhappy You are a mendicant walking in the streets, not knowing where you will get your next meal But how happy you are! How did you attain this?' Ramdas told them, that he had uprooted the ego-sense which was responsible for all the miseries of man He added, 'When the ego-sense is gone, every situation which God gives you, makes you happy and not at all miserable Because, you do not depend any longer upon the external conditions for happiness Man depends upon them and consequently suffers The happy man is he whose mind is

always attuned to the divine Life and Spirit. Ramdas has found happiness within, while you are searching for it outside Turn your mind within, and you will find there the source of joy.'

Many years ago, Ramdas was thinking that he was separate from God He was taking His name and praying to Him so that he may be merged in His all-pervading, all-transcendent Being But gradually light dawned in him by which he realised that the difference between him and God was false. Then God spoke to Ramdas. 'You call yourself My servant. But you and I are one' His grace came in such abundance that the ego totally disappeared, just as darkness disappears when light is brought So by continuous thought of Him the ego-sense was completely destroyed Ramdas found out that he and the supreme Being are one

For realising God you are not to go anywhere It is not in any particular place or particular time that you can have Him. But you will be able to have Him at all places and at all times, because He is everywhere and for ever. He is now here with us We can feel Him. We can be conscious of Him and recognise His presence all round

Happiness and misery are only attitudes of the mind. You think something is for your happiness and you are happy. If you think it is for your unhappiness, you are miserable. If you find God, who is eternal happiness, within you, then you need not care what your external condition is In that state, pleasure and pain will be the same to you A lump of earth and a bar of gold will have no difference for you, because you have no attraction for the one and no repulsion for the other. You do not care what happens to you from outside Success and failure, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, all will be the same to you. You remain unaffected because your heart is ever filled with divine bliss which is eternal. When you are blissful, you do not feel the passing of time; nay, you are unconscious of it. You live then in eternity. When you live in eternity, you are all round happy.

HAPPY MAN IS THE MOST GENEROUS MAN

When we are blissful we mean or do no harm tc anybody We are trying to exploit and do evil to others because we are discontented. A happy man is the mos generous man Suppose a person wants a job He approaches a big boss for the purpose He first goes tc the latter's servant, asks him if the boss is in and if so whether he has taken his food, and if he can see him The servant asks the person why he wants to know i the boss has taken his food or not Then the visitor replies that it is only after food the boss would be happy and that was the proper time for him to request for a job If asked before the boss had his food, there was every likelihood of an outright refusal, because he would be then not in a happy mood

So when you become the happiest man you become the most generous man You will try your best to make all others happy like yourself Whatever you have and whatever you get, you will freely give away for the good of the world You will be most liberal and love will naturally flow out of you towards everybody It is said that when a man laughs, the whole world laughs with him When a man weeps, he weeps alone Because, everybody wants happiness, everybody wants to laugh So laugh yourself first on attaining the infinite joy in yourself and make everybody else happy

GIVE UP EGO

So long as we have the ego-sense, we can never be happy We must shed the ego-sense by surrendering ourselves to God by meditating on Him and identifying ourselves with Him It is only the ego-sense and not the ego Ego-sense is a consciousness which is superimposed on us. We don't know how it arose If we try to get at the seed of the onion, we do not find it because it is not there Similarly you search for the ego, and you do not find it because it does not exist But it is better to make the attempt for finding out the ego. For, your mind that goes in search of the ego, not finding it, dissolves in the Eternal Spirit and you realise that you are that Spirit.

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN THE WHEEL OF TIME

People do not know this They are not satisfied with what they get of worldly things. Dissatisfaction and discontent make their life miserable. They are caught in the wheel of time. As a philosopher has rightly said, 'We are sitting on the rim of the wheel of time and are whirling on it, forgetting the axle' If we go to the axle we are safe, because the axle does not change or move. It would be well to catch hold of the axle and still move on the rim of the wheel You can be at both points at the same time.

The Bhagavad Gita also teaches us, 'Do action as if you have not done action.' Be steadily fixed in the highest reality and then do actions in the world Then you will be active and inactive at the same time It will be then a spontaneous outflow of divine energy from you for the good of humanity, without your being conscious that you are doing good to anyone. If anybody praises you for what you have done. you will say you have not done anything at all, because inwardly you are actionless though outwardly you are active. In other words, you might say, 'God does everything I am only an instrument in His hands. By His power I am doing all things So do not praise me, but praise Him.' You know well that you are not the actor. God within you is the doer and you are only a vehicle Lastly you will have to say that the vehicle is also He!

THE BEST PRAYER

There are so many struggling to purify their minds, but they do not have any success because they are egoistic. Egoistic struggle does not lead us far. We must bow down before Him, surrender to Him Say, 'O God! I am nothing You are everything'. They say that the best prayer is that which God puts into our mouth So let Him make us pray to Himself for the right thing Let us not pray to Him for the things we consider best, but which might prove to be really harmful. There was a poem which Ramdas read many years ago, entitled 'Unanswered Pra-

yers'. The Poet said 'O God! My prayer to you is that You should not grant my prayers. In my foolishness I am asking for so many things which may not be good for me. I leave everything to You You know what is best for me'

The child in its folly asks the mother for a knife to play with The mother knows the knife would hurt the child and so she does not grant the child's wish If the child leaves to the mother to do what she likes for him, then she will do the best for him. God is called Providence. He is the provider He provides us with what we need. We should not ask for material things Ask Him only to give us true devotion which will ultimately make us realise that we are one with Him

'First seek the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be added unto you' These are the words of Jesus How true they are! But we are asking for name, fame, power, and we get more and more involved in these worldly things and forget Him If we leave it to Him, He will give us what is good Let us be satisfied with what He gives Therefore it is said, we should not be discontented with the situations in which He places us But discontent there should be for our not having progressed sufficiently on the path and attained the vision of God. Let us only aspire for Him Let us pray, 'O God! Make my mind pure I have been told by sages that You are within me. But I am not aware of You Make me aware of You'

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U. S A,
19th October, 1954.

Second Speech at the Y M.C.A.

POWER OF PRAYER

Dear Friends, — The subject on which Ramdas is asked to speak today is 'Power of Prayer'. Prayer presupposes a belief in the existence of God. Otherwise we would not pray. We therefore take it for granted even before we have seen God, that He does exist This faith in His existence comes to us from the teachings of saints and sages who have seen Him Now, taking for granted that God exists, we have next to know where He is. There also the saints have taught us that God dwells whithin us Heart is the place in which God resides. Having known where He dwells, we have to see Him and realise Him and live in the light of His guidance This is possible only by contacting God. That contact is possible only through prayer

A MEANS TO COMMUNION

Prayer is a means by which we communicate with Him and establish a relationship with Him. We look upon Him as father, mother, friend, master or Lord We consider ourselves to be His children, servants or friends This relationship brings us nearer to Him, and our prayer then becomes very real to us When we look upon Him as our master, we pray to Him to guide us so that we may always walk on the path of righteousness without going astray God, who is dwelling within, listens to our prayer, responds to it and grants us the necessary strength to walk always on the path of Truth This power we derive by prayer Prayer should be done with the sole object of attaining the knowledge of our oneness with Him

The word 'knowledge' is rightly used here, because we are ever one with Him, but we do not know this. As we do not know it, we are like children who have missed the mother. Although the mother is with us, if

we have closed our eyes, we do not see her The moment we open our eyes we see the mother. It is not that she came there only when we opened our eyes. She was there even before, but as we had closed our eyes, we could not see her Similarly we have closed our eyes against God within us If we open our eyes, we shall see He is there. He has ever been there. We are not conscious of Him, we have forgotten Him, and therefore we feel we are away from Him. It is this sense of separation that makes us miserable and unhappy, and subjects us to worries, cares and anxieties The moment we know that God is within us, and that we are always basking in the sunshine of His grace, then we feel supremely happy, like a child that has found the missing mother

So, prayer enables us to contact God and also to feel His presence within us. As we go on remembering Him through prayer, the intensity of our longing to have Him increases, and we feel His nearness. Our mind becomes purer and purer day by day, by means of the prayer and continuous remembrance of Him. When Ramdas was struggling to know God, to realise God, to feel His presence, his one mainstay was God's holy name He kept this all-powerful Name on his tongue always, and he felt he was very near God, because the Name gave continuous remembrance, and the remembrance developed into a consciousness in which he felt not only nearness of God, but also oneness with Him So, Name leads us to Him without any doubt Prayer and chanting of His name are the two things needed to find Him within us and realise our unity with Him Ramdas had not done anything else except these two things — prayer and repetition of God's name. Whatever else he did in the way of discipline, such as fasting, going in solitude, courting the society of saints, etc, was done with the sole object of keeping up a continuous remembrance of God in his mind Whenever God-remembrance left him, he used to feel utterly miserable When the remembrance was there, he was perfectly happy.

THE AGONY OF SEPARATION

When you have once contacted God and derived the consequent peace and joy, separation from Him becomes unbearable This has been the experience of all devotees of God who have tried to remember Him and feel His presence always with them In the early days of our struggle to approach Him, there is what they call 'touch and go,' going on within us We find Him for a time and the next moment we miss Him, and we are thrown into a state of agony. This agony makes us pine for Him, and that pining and longing again brings us in contact with Him It is said that the feeling of the devotee who has missed Him is like the feeling of a fish thrown out of water As the fish thirsts for water, so the devotee thirsts for God. When this state of things persists, it is easy for us to have continuous remembrance of Him Even in separation, that intense remembrance will make us conscious of His presence within us and we will have again His union. This agony of separation is called 'Viraha' in Sanskrit.

We are living in the world and wish that we should have God But our desire for God is so lukewarm that we do not miss Him at all We are so much used to forgetting Him that we do not consider that it is a kind of disease in us Our normal state is to ever live, move and have our being in Him. We are living in an abnormal or diseased state. We do not even admit that we are abnormal or diseased When we come to admit that, we pray day and night for His grace so that we can keep our mind ever in union with Him, through constant remembrance

Prayer should be done not with a view to get from God any material things We are more concerned about material things when we pray to God, than about the real thing — the union with Him. We ask for all the things that God would give us, which are perishable, and which we have ultimately to leave behind when we finish this earthly career. Ramdas remembers in this connection the

famous teaching of Jesus Christ, 'Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be added unto you.' So, what we should have is His grace, so that we can realise our oneness with Him, and feel His presence always with us. This should be the sole purpose of our prayer.

GOD'S ASSURANCE

In the Bhagavad Gita, God assures us, 'To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever harmonious, I bring full security.' That means, he who has made God the goal of life and strives to attain Him, and for that purpose remembers Him constantly, him God looks after in every way Ramdas' first year's life, as chronicled in the book 'In Quest of God', was lived by wandering from place to place all over India in a state of complete surrender to God He had no thought of the body, he had no thought of food; he did not know where to rest. His one thought — and the only thought — was of God When the tongue was continuously chanting God's name, his mind was in a state of absorption in the Divine. So he was not feeling himself separate from the Divine The world, for the time being, disappeared from his mind. When thus he wandered all over India, God in a mysterious way looked after him. Therefore the Sanskrit Sloka, the meaning of which Ramdas told you a few minutes back, is printed on the front cover page of his book 'In Quest of God' as its motto This assurance of God has been fully testified and proved to be true in that one year's life which was only the beginning Now, of course, it is evident that at every second of his life God is looking after him most tenderly He has come here all the way, may be about 12,000 miles, from India All through the journey, he was looked after by Him most carefully When he started from India, many friends feared that he would have to undergo great hardships But God carried out our programme so beautifully that he had not to suffer anyway in this long travel

THE RIGHT PRAYER

Therefore it is not proper for us to ask God for any

material things, but only for the things of the highest spiritual value, viz., the realisation of God. God says, 'Whatever I give you is impermanent The Eternal is Myself. If you pray that I should be yours, I will become yours' But we do not want Him We want only the things that He gives, which are perishable How can we then have eternal peace? Pray to God to become yours, or to make you His. It amounts to the same thing whether you become His, or He becomes yours, as, in either case, you ask for immortality In immortality there is real joy and peace There is a prayer among the Hindus, 'Lead me, O God!, from the unreal to the Real, lead me from darkness to Light; lead me from death to Immortality' This is the right prayer for us all. Thus we shall come by the highest beatitude, we shall enjoy supreme peace here and now

Q What does spirituality mean?

Ramdas That which relates to the experience of the Spirit is spirituality We have to take at first that Spirit and matter are different Our body is matter and the Truth dwelling in this body is Spirit We must know we are not bodies, but that we are the immortal Spirit Many people go with the impression that they are only bodies made up of the five elements This is not true There is the Spirit within us that makes us talk, walk and do everything People think that they are moving their limbs by their own will and power There are so many movements and changes going on within this body, such as the functions of the digestive organs, blood circulation, growth of the hair, etc We cannot say these things are done by us. The same power, which is responsible for the movements inside our bodies, is also responsible for the outer movements. You see that the wind blows, the sun gives light, trees grow, birds fly and sing All these and many more movements and changes are going on about us They are not movements caused by any separate units of power working accidentally, or by chance, or due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms If it is so, we can very well deny the existence of a spiritual power that per-

meates the universe and causes all the movements in it. But this is not so There is an all-pervading force or energy that makes us talk, walk and perform all actions. If we recognise this universal power and know that that power is responsible for all that we do, our ego will disappear, we shall be one with the universal Life and Truth, and we shall be supremely free and happy. So long as there is ego in us, we feel we are doing things ourselves, and we are caught in a trap. To get release from this self-made trap, we are asked to resign ourselves to the will of God. His will is nothing but the power of God active in nature, active in us. By surrendering ourselves to the divine power and will, we set free the supreme bliss and peace which is now locked up through the assertion of the individual will

QUESTION OF FREE WILL

Q: What is free will and how does it stand in relationship with the Divine will?

Ramdas: Really, there is no free will There is only Divine will working everywhere. It is a mistake to think that we, as individuals, have got any power to do anything. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

'The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His illusive power, to revolve, as if mounted on a machine'

So, He is at the inception, at the growth and at the destruction of all things It is the one power that causes all these to happen in the universe If we submit to that power and know that that power is active in us, we shall be free from the ego-sense, and realise that we are the infinite, immortal, all-pervading, universal Spirit and Truth To know this is to live in God

MEANING OF GOD-REALISATION

Q Could you tell me about God-realisation or union with God that stands out strongest in your mind?

Ramdas: God-realisation is to become God Himself. When you have realised that you are the universal Truth, then you become the form and expression of the Truth The great spiritual Masters, who come to teach mankind the path that leads to God-realisation, are concrete images of God They are, verily, Gods walking on the earth Because, their ego having completely vanished, God's power, wisdom, light, love and joy are manifest in them Their contact enlightens, elevates and redeems the soul caught in the toils of this worldly life, hungering and thirsting after worldly pleasures Surely, a soul gets liberation from the bondage in which it lives, by the contact of a God-realised soul

Ramdas can tell you that during the early days of his spiritual practices, he had contacted a number of great saints and sages, whom he looked upon as the very embodiments of Divinity. He could clearly feel in their presence that they were not ordinary human beings. They had not only seen and realised God, but they were, verily, God Himself in those forms. Many people do not accept this assertion. They believe only in the impersonal aspect of God. But the impersonal aspect of God cannot have any concern or interest in us. Grace cannot come to you from the Impersonal, whereas you can get grace, you can get real help, from those persons who have realised the Impersonal. They are the personal forms of the Impersonal They are the saints and sages and spiritual Masters Their contact is essential It is they who awaken in us the longing for God, and then guide us on the path until we reach Him If you cry, appeal and pray to the unmanifest, the nameless and the formless, you do not get any response. Response comes from the saints, because they are the expressions of God, Who has taken human forms to redeem mankind from sin and ignorance So their contact is most important

So God-realisation means to become God Himself. That is how Ramdas feels about it At the end of his Sadhana, God told him, 'You were at one time a servant of Mine, but now I can tell you definitely that you and I

are one' One, both as the personal and impersonal. Because of oneness with the Impersonal, he is given the sight to see Him everywhere, as everybody and as everything. So, even in his active life, he has no sense of separation from Him. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna shows to Arjuna His universal form and Arjuna says, 'O God, I behold You everywhere inside, outside, up and down I see You and none but You. All forms are Thine'. This vision, that came to Arjuna, frightened him because it came too suddenly It was so grand! When we get this vision, the spiritual eminence to which we are raised acts as a shock, and the experience is simply indescribable.

RELATIONSHIP AFTER REALISATION

After seeing God everywhere, you still live in the world as an instrument, as a child, as a servant, or as a devotee of God, surrendering yourself entirely to the Divine, knowing fully well that by His power you are actuated to do all things People may say that if you have become one with God, where is the question of surrender. But there is surrender, because you do not wish to remain always one with Him. In the impersonal, you are one with Him. In the personal, physical aspect, you maintain a sense of separation from Him, by keeping up a relationship with Him — He as master and yourself as servant Even though there is apparent separation, you do not miss Him because of the inner realisation of the Self

'God' is a term which does not apply only to the impersonal It applies to the supreme Being, who is at once personal and impersonal It is such a God whom you contact in the fullness of spiritual experience. It is strange, being God yourself, you become His servant. That is the beauty of the relationship

FATHER AND SON

Jesus Christ's words have got the greatest significance here He said, 'I and my Father are one' Still he called

himself the Son of the Father. When the question arose how he could show, to his disciples, God whom he had seen, and from whom he came to the earth as a saviour of humanity, he replied, 'He who sees the Son sees the Father.' Son himself is the embodiment of the Father 'Father' here is the impersonal Spirit and 'Son' is the Spirit born in flesh and blood as Jesus for leading humanity on the path to everlasting life. So, Son is the personal and Father is the impersonal The personal is Jesus who had the knowledge of the impersonal. We have to become one with the Father, before we can be His true Son, as Jesus is. This is the right of every human being — the right of rising to the height to which the great spiritual Masters have reached Saints, the spiritual Masters, take us to the Father, the impersonal, all-pervading, static, calm, immortal Spirit — our real Existence

DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

Q: Having once experienced God, why should we have again the dark night of the soul?

Ramdas: This is true in the case of all spiritual aspirants and devotees of God The experience spoken of by you is only a glimpse of the Divine and not the real experience from which there is no fall Here what we need is Grace to keep us always alert, to hold us above the dark water in which we are drowning every moment. God's grace alone can save us from the temptations of the world Until we are illumined with the divine light, power and joy, the lower nature keeps us down, not allowing us to rise to the spiritual height Our nature is made up of the three qualities, Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. Sattwa is the quality of harmony, Rajas is of restlessness, and Tamas is of laziness or inertia. When we are seized with Rajas and Tamas, we are unable to remember God. Our mind runs away whenever we sit for meditation or prayer. We are lazy and sleepy There is terrible depression in the mind This is what is called the dark night of the soul

When the mind rises to Rajas, it is restless, but not in a state of darkness. There are glimpses coming now and again When the mind rises to Sattwa — the quality of harmony — the mind is steady and the person can properly meditate and feel his nearness to God He is happy and cheerful Man is always under the control of any one of these qualities and is enveloped by it We are subject to them so long as we live in the lower levels of consciousness Our struggle is to rise above these three qualities and establish ourselves in the supreme Spirit permanently.

What is needed here is the contact of a saint and his grace God pours His grace on us through saints. His grace comes and lifts us above the qualities of nature, and we get established in the universal Spirit, which is our real Being Thereafter, there will be no fall, and the soul no more experiences the dark night. Our union or oneness with Him will be complete Till we are fixed in it, there is such a thing as going upward and coming downward If it is not possible for the person to contact a saint, the next best thing he can do is to go into solitude and humble himself before God, feel that he is nothing, lower than the dust, lower than a blade of grass, and then pray to Him, 'O Lord, take me back to you again Raise me from this slough of despondency, from this darkness, to Yourself, and give me eternal peace.' Cry as a child does to its mother Then by His grace directly flowing into you, you will be raised and you will get back that contact which you had lost for the time being.

CHRIST, BUDDHA AND KRISHNA

Q In what sense are Christ, Buddha and Krishna God, and in what sense are they men?

Ramdas So far as Ramdas' belief goes, and that belief is based on deep spiritual experience, he looks upon Christ, Krishna and Buddha as the very embodiments of God They are not ordinary men God has assumed human forms for our sake. Though they look like men,

they are not men. If they are mere men, we cannot get any spiritual benefit from them, but we do get great things from them. It is not from men that we get all this, but from God

If we look upon them as men, there is no meaning in our having faith in them, taking their Names and praying to them. Millions worship these great Masters of the world and derive incalculable benefit Such devotees are lifted and made perfectly divine. Such grace, light and power coming from them cannot be taken as coming from mere human beings or men. They are fully saturated with divine radiance, peace and joy, and they simply shower love and joy on everyone who comes in contact with them This is not possible for a human being Thousands go to them and are saved There is a holy aura around them Nobody is left out from their vast all-embracing love. Compare them with men and see the vast difference — as much difference as between night and day, or between a glow-worm and the sun!

Om Shantihi, Shantihi, Shantihi!

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